

TANK AT JAINTEAPUR. JAINTEA HILLS IN DISTANCE.



[illegible] AT [illegible] WELLS IN [illegible]

ASSAM DISTRICT GAZETTEERS.

Volume II.

SYLHET

BY

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PREFACE.

The Gazetteer of Sylhet is nothing more than a general description of the district as a whole, and does not, as Gazetteers generally do, include a directory. There are, however, hardly any places in the district which are worthy of the name of town, and the little villages in which the people live do not call for a separate and detailed description. Places which are centres of local trade or of some industry have been specified by name, but to attempt to describe each of these villages would merely have resulted in the most tedious iteration. It should be added that the Gazetteer was compiled at a time when Assam was still a separate Province, and that when the Province is mentioned it is to Assam and not to Eastern Bengal and Assam that reference is made. My acknowledgments are due to the Deputy Commissioner for his kindness in examining the work in proof.

B. C. ALLEN.

SHILLONG, *October*, 1905.

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CHAPTER I.

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Boundaries and dimensions.

The district of Sylhet (vernacular *Srihatta*), which occupies the lower valley of the Barak or Surma river, lies between 23°59′ and 25°13′ N. and 90°56′ and 93°36′ E. and covers an area of 5,435 square miles. It is bounded on the north by the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, on the east by Cachar, on the south by the State of Hill Tippera, and on the west by the districts of Tippera and Mymensingh.

General appearance.

The district is a broad and level valley bounded on either side by hills of considerable height. On the north there are none of the low outer ranges that generally break the descent of a mountain system to the plain ; the change is sharp and abrupt, and west of Therriaghat, the cliffs are like a Titanic sunk fence in some monstrous park, which drop 4,000 feet and more from the plateau above. Farther east the level falls, and the Jaintia Hills sink in an easy slope towards the plain. The mountains on the south belong to a different system, and run north and south instead of east and west ; they do not rise like an unbroken wall along the southern frontier, but thrust out eight spurs into the plain itself. On the eastern boundary one of these spurs stretches right up to the Barak, and the Surma Valley at this point is only some ten miles in breadth. The district is only a few feet above the level of the sea, is

intersected with numerous tortuous and sluggish rivers, and is dotted over with huge saucer-like depressions called *haors*, which are filled with water in the rainy season. Between June and September, a great part of Sunamganj, the north-westerly subdivision, goes under water. The banks of the rivers are the highest portions of the country and are lined with villages, but the rest of the subdivision is converted into a huge swamp covered with reeds and jungle grass. Here and there, there are islets of high ground which are always crowded with houses, but for a traveller passing through this country in the rainy season, it is difficult to realize that it supports a population of about 300 to the square mile. Further east the level rises, and the scenery is of a more normal type. Broad plains, covered with waving rice, are bounded on every side by what seems at a little distance to be dense and sombre forest. It is, however, only the jungle of bamboos, plantains, jack fruit, and mango trees, which completely conceal the houses of the cultivators; and a closer inspection shows that it is not one continuous belt of villages, but that the bamboo clumps are situated at varying intervals, and that it is only an optical delusion that makes them appear like an unbroken line. The scenery is monotonous, but in the summer time the wide expanse of green is restful to the eye, and near the hills the effect is very picturesque.

Round Sylhet town there are numerous low hills, covered with the freshest and most luxuriant turf; the bamboos which surround the villages are some of the most graceful of their kind, and the plain is bounded on the north by the bluest of blue hills. From Chhatak

the view is of a different character. Rivers and swamps extend on every side, but here and there are islets and ridges of high land, with lawns that slope to the water, dotted with shady trees that recall some garden washed by the waters of the Thames. To the south there are waving fields of rice, bounded with a long line of bamboos and palms; on the north the hills rise like a mighty wall from the waste of waters and jungle at their feet. Their summits are often clothed in clouds, through which the rivers hurry to hurl themselves over precipices one or two thousand feet in height. The cliffs are here as sheer as though carved out by some cyclopean mason, and even in that humid atmosphere no tree or plant is able to obtain a foothold on the smooth unbroken surface. Below these mighty precipices are steep slopes clothed in dense tropical forest. In the central portion of the district, the scenery is more tame, but towards the south, the hills again appear, though the ranges that are situated within the boundaries of Sylhet are too low to add much to the beauty of the scene. At the eastern end, near Karimganj, dense groves of the graceful areca palm make a pleasant foreground to the blue mountains of North Cachar, and the low isolated hills, that project some two or three hundred feet above the alluvium, serve to break the level of the plain. The rivers with which the valley is intersected are dotted over with native craft, and, even in the winter time, the country on every side looks fresh and green.

Jungle land.

In the central and southern portion of Sylhet there is little waste or uncultivated land, except in the hills, which in their

natural state are covered with low scrub or bamboo jungle, and in the *haors*, which are lakes in the rainy season, and magnificent grazing grounds in the cold weather. In the north the Khasi and Jaintia Hills rise from swamps which recall the jungle that fringes the Brahmaputra, and there are wide stretches covered with reeds and elephant grass from ten to fifteen feet in height.

Roughly speaking, the district falls into the following divisions. To the north, there is the wall of hills along whose base the district boundary runs. At the foot of the hills there is a fosse or moat, a belt of country five or six miles wide, in places even more, which goes under water in the rains and is covered with high reed jungle, patches of which are cleared in the cold weather and sown with winter crops. This belt of flooded land is also found along the western border of Sylhet, though here, especially towards the south, it carries little jungle. In the south, the level gradually rises towards the Tippera Hills, and the spurs projecting northwards from this system afford a considerable area of high land suited to the growth of tea. The central portion of the district is a flat plain gradually rising in level towards the east, intersected with numerous sluggish rivers and water courses, and sinking here and there into great saucer-like depressions, which are being gradually filled by deposits of silt.

Mountain system.

The Khasi and Jaintia Hills lie outside the borders of the district, and it is only at Chhatak, Barakia, and Panduah, and in the north-east corner of the Jaintia Parganas, between Jaintiapur

and Mulagul, that the outlying ranges are represented by a few small hills that rise above the surface of the alluvium. A little to the north of Sylhet town there are numerous isolated hillocks, called *tilas*, from one to two hundred feet in height, and at Chiknagul, on the road between Sylhet and Jaintiapur, these hills take the form of ranges which cover an area of several square miles. A few more *tilas* are to be found between the Surma and the Kusiyara, near Golapganj and Madhuganj, but the rest of the country north of the Kusiyara and the Barak is a broad unbroken plain.

South of that river eight ranges of hills project from the Tippera system into the valley. On the extreme east is the Chhatachura range which starts from the Chhatachura peak, on the boundary of the Tippera and Lushai Hills, and forms the dividing line between the districts of Sylhet and Cachar. Chhatachura itself is 2,087 feet above the level of the sea, but the range gradually declines in height. The middle section, which bears the name of Saraspur, is only 1000 feet above sea level, while near the Barak at Badarpur it is only three or four hundred feet in height. On the western side of the Singla, or as it is more generally called, the Chargola valley, the Dohaliya or Pratapgarh hills stretch in a compact chain as far north as the Son *bil*. Beyond this point they break up into isolated *tilas*, which are continued right up to the Barak at Badarpur. The general height of the range is from four to five hundred feet, and the slopes are easy and gentle. The Pratapgarh range is separated from the Pathariya hills by the valley of the Langai. The Pathariyas are a tract of hilly country, from six to seven

miles in breadth, which runs almost due north as far as Latu. Several of the higher peaks are from six to seven hundred feet in height, but the level rises gradually from the plain, and the slopes are very easy. The Harargaz, or Langla hills might almost be classed as a continuation of the Pathariya range to the south-west. Near the frontier they attain an elevation in one peak of over 1,100 feet, but the general height of the outlying spurs is only about one-third of this.

The Bhanugach or Rajkandi hills are a small low range south of the Shamshernagar railway station. Here they are stopped by the valley of the Manu, but reappear again on the further side, and under the name of the Ita hills, stretch nearly up to Fenchuganj. In height they range from 150 to 300 feet. The Balisira range lies between the Dholai on the east, the Manu on the north, and the road from Maulavi Bazar to Srimangal on the west. They rise gently from the plain to heights varying from 150 to 300 feet, and are rather a tract of elevated land than hills, in the sense in which that term is usually employed. The Satgaon and Raghunandan hills are two low ranges to the west. The railway runs along the foot of the Raghunandans from Itakhola to Shahji Bazar, and crosses the Satgaon hills near the station of that name. They contain no peaks of any height, and in general appearance resemble the Balisira range. In their natural state all of these hills are covered with tree forest, bamboo jungle, or low scrub. The soil and level were, however, found to be suitable for tea, and large areas have been cleared on the lower slopes and cultivated with that plant.

River system. The Barak or Surma.

The principal river of the district is the Barak, which rises on the southern slopes of the Naga-Manipur watershed, flows through Manipur, Cachar, and Sylhet, and finally empties itself into the old bed of the Brahmaputra near Bhoirab Bazar, after a course, measured along its northern branch, of 560 miles. From Badarpur to a little beyond Haritikar, a distance of some seven miles, it forms the boundary between Sylhet and Cachar. At this point it divides into two branches, the more northerly of which is called the Surma, and as far as Jelalpur flows in a north-westerly direction towards the Jaintia Hills, and continues to form the boundary between Cachar and Sylhet. Here it enters the latter district, and after receiving the waters of the Lobha, flows a south-westerly course to Golapganj. From this point the stream again takes a northerly direction past Sylhet town to Chhatak. From Chhatak to Sunamganj its course lies near the base of the Khasi Hills, but at the latter town it again turns sharply to the south. A little to the north of Dirai it turns westward and enters Mymensingh, and flows partly through that district, partly along the Sylhet frontier. Near Ajmiriganj it is joined by the Kalni, and at Madna by the Barak, and the combined stream which is here known as the Dhaleswari, finally falls into the old bed of the Brahmaputra.

The lower channel is known at first as the Kusiyara, but after its confluence with the Manu it again divides into two branches. The northern arm is called the Bibiyana, and afterwards the Kalni, and rejoins the Surma on the borders of the district near Ajmiriganj. The

southern stream resumes the name of the original river, the Barak, and, after passing Nabiganj and Habiganj, falls into the Surma a little to the west of that place. The Surma in its course through the northern portion of the district receives the following rivers which bring to it the drainage of the hills—the Lobha, the Hari, which under the name of the Kusiya, joins it a little to the east of Sylhet, the Goyain Gong, or as it is called in the lower part of its course the Chengar khal, the Bogapani, and the Jadukata. The rainfall in this portion of the district is extremely heavy, and is only exceeded by the phenomenal precipitation on the southern face of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, the whole of which drains down into the valley. The plain is less than 50 feet above sea level, and the natural consequence is that the rivers are unable to carry off the enormous volume of water precipitated on their catchment areas. The whole of the district north of the Surma is a network of streams and channels which connect the principal rivers with one another, and during the rainy season the lower parts of the country go under water.

The Southern Rivers—The Singla.

The principal tributaries of the Kusiyara are the Singla, the Langai, the Manu, the Gopla, and the Khowai. The Singla rises in the Lushai Hills, and flows between the Chhatachura and Pratapgarh ranges northwards to the Son *bil*. On emerging from this *bil* it is known as the Kachua, and falls into the Kusiyara a little to the east of Karimganj town. For the first eight miles of its course through the district, it flows through jungle land which is very sparsely peopled ; but from

that point to its junction with the Kusiyara its banks are fringed with villages and tea gardens.

The Langai.

The Langai also rises in the mountainous country beyond the southern frontier, and flows a northerly course between the Pratapgarh and Pathariya hills to within a few miles of Karimganj town. Here it turns to the south-west and finally disappears in the Hakaluki *haor*, but during the rainy season it is connected with the Kusiyara by a channel known as the Natia khal.

The Manu.

The Manu rises in Hill Tippera, and flows a tortuous north-westerly course between the Rajkandi and Ita hills, and along the northern face of the Balisira range past Maulavi Bazar, till it falls into the Kusiyara a little to the east of Bahadurpur. Its principal tributary is the Dholai, which collects the drainage from the Balisira and Rajkandi hills. The Gopla drains the low country between the Balisira and Satgaon hills, and the Khowai rises in Hill Tippera and falls into the Barak at Habiganj. Throughout the whole of its course its banks are lined with villages, and some of them, like Muchikandi and Laskarpur, are of considerable importance.

The country between the Surma and the Kusiyara or Barak exhibits much the same phenomena as are to be found in the northern section of the district. The rainfall is extremely heavy, the level falls but slightly towards the west, and the line of drainage is not clear and well defined. There is a whole network

of smaller streams, many of which flow from north to south, and rise from or disappear in *haors* or swamps. South of the Barak, the level falls more steeply from the hills and the general trend of the drainage is towads that river.

General characteristics of rivers.

The rivers possess the characteristics usually to be found in a flat alluvial country. The current is sluggish, the course is tortuous, and the bottom muddy. In the rains the waters are surcharged with matter washed from the surrounding hills, and in times of flood a large portion of this silt is deposited in the immediate neighbourhood of the stream. The result is that the banks of the rivers tend to become higher than the country at the back, and they are in consequence generally lined with villages. The extent to which these rivers are used for navigation is referred to in the section dealing with communications.

Swamps and marshes.

The two salient facts about the drainage system of Sylhet are the enormous quantity of rain water which is precipitated upon the district itself, or drains into it from the surrounding hills, and the absence of a sufficiently steep gradient to carry this huge rainfall off. As a natural consequence water tends to collect in the rainy season in every hollow, and the larger depressions, which are known as *haors*, are a distinctive feature in the district scenery. From June to September they are considerable lakes, but when the rains end the water gradually drains off, and during the

dry season is only to be found in the lowest parts of the *haor*. The remainder is covered with reeds and grass and is sometimes sown with winter crops. The level of these swamps is being gradually raised by the silt that is every year poured into them, and the submerged area is being gradually reduced. Statement A appended to this chapter shows what an enormous number of these swamps there are, and how they are distributed over every portion of the district, while Statement B contains the names of the most important *haors*.

Geology.

The plain is of alluvial origin and is composed of clay and sand in varying proportions. The low isolated hills, which here and there project above the level of the alluvium, are formed of layers of sand and gravel, which are often highly indurated with a ferruginous cement. The hills to the south are composed of upper tertiary rocks, in which sand stone largely predominates. Although Sylhet lime is well known in the Calcutta market, and though an enormous quantity is every year exported from the district, the only lime quarry within the boundaries of Sylhet is the one at Jaflong, and even this is not worked at the present day. Deposits of coal exist near Pathariya in the Langai valley, but no attempt has yet been made to work them.

Rainfall and temperature.

The climate of Sylhet is warmer and not less humid than that of the Assam Valley, but between the middle of November and the middle of February is fairly cool and pleasant. In

March the temperature begins to rise, but heavy rain in April and May prevents the development of the fierce hot weather that is such a trial to the residents in the plains of Upper India at this season of the year. Table I in the appendix shows the average monthly rainfall at certain selected stations in the district. November to February are the four dry months, the average rainfall at Sylhet during that period being only 3·24 inches. During April and May, when precipitation in Northern India is at a minimum, some 35 inches fall at the sadr station, and in the four succeeding months the rainfall is even heavier. There is a marked difference between the rainfall in the northern and southern portions of the district. In Sunamganj it is about 210 inches in the year, at Sylhet 157, and at Karimganj 160. At Maulavi Bazar, on the other hand, it is only 104 inches and at Habiganj ten inches less.

Storms and floods.

Storms generally come from the south-west, and are usually welcomed as they relieve the oppressiveness of the atmosphere, but are seldom sufficiently violent to do serious damage. Flood is the normal condition of the northern and western portions of the district during the rainy season, but the people have learned to adapt themselves to the peculiar conditions of the country, and do not as a rule suffer any special inconvenience. In the following chapter reference is made to the floods which are said to have been the cause of terrible desolation and misery at the end of the 18th century, but no such calamities have occurred of recent years. In 1853, there was a high flood, and the annual inundation was more pronounced than usual in

the west of the district in August 1893, September 1897, and July 1903, but no very serious damage was done.

Earthquakes.

Sylhet, like the rest of Assam, is a seismic area, and earthquakes are referred to in some of the earliest correspondence in the office of the Deputy Commissioner, though they do not seem to have been the cause of any serious damage. The shock of 1869 was an exception. This earthquake was felt over an area of 250,000 square miles, from Upper Burma to Patna and Hazaribagh, and is supposed to have originated in a fissure about 20 miles long, situated at a considerable depth below the surface on the northern border of the Jaintia Hills. In Sylhet, the steeple of the church was shattered, the walls of the Court-house and the Circuit bungalow were cracked, and in the eastern part of the district the banks of many of the rivers caved in. There was no loss of life, and the damage done was inconsiderable in comparison with the havoc wrought by the great earthquake of June 12th, 1897.

The earthquake of 1897.

This earthquake was felt over an area of 1,750,000 square miles, from Rangoon in the south-east to Kangra in the north-west, from the Himalayas to Masulipatam, and serious damage was done to masonry buildings over an area of 145,000 square miles.* The area of maximum disturbance was a tract of country of the shape of a cocked hat, whose base line ran from Rangpur to Jaintiapur, while the top of the crown was near Barpeta. The first shock occurred at Sylhet about 4-50 P.M. and was not preceded

* Memoirs of Geological Survey of India, Vol. XXIX, p. 52.

by any special atmospheric conditions, though the inhabitants of a village at the foot of the hills north of Sunamganj stated that, for some days previously, they had heard continual explosions, which seemed to be taking place in the north-east, *i.e.*, in the direction of Shillong. Nearly all the masonry buildings in Sylhet town were levelled with the ground. A new cutchery that was in course of construction at Sunamganj was thrown down, and the old cutcherry and the residence of the Subdivisional Officer only escaped because they were made of reeds, plaister, and timber instead of masonry. The residence of the Subdivisional Officer at Habiganj was also wrecked. In Maulavi Bazar and Karimganj no damage was done to public buildings, and very little injury was done even to the masonry buildings on tea gardens in the south of the district. The banks of the rivers, especially in the north, caved in and many people were drowned.

Casualties.

The list of casualties as finally reported was 545, distributed as follows: Sylhet town 55, North Sylhet (rural area) 178, Sunamganj 287, Habiganj 7, South Sylhet 8, Karimganj 10. These figures clearly show the enormous difference between the violence of the shock as experienced in the north and south of the district. In Sylhet town most of the casualties were due to the collapse of masonry buildings. The prisoners in the jail had a most fortunate escape. At the time when the earthquake occurred they were paraded in the yard preparatory to being locked up for the night, and had the shock come half an hour later, hundreds would in all probability have been killed. Most of the deaths in the mofussil were due to drowning,

the unfortunate people being precipitated from the falling banks into the river, or swamped in the boats in which they were travelling at the time. One hundred and seventy-nine of the deaths in the Sunamganj subdivision were said to be due to drowning, 87 to the collapse of buildings, and 13 to the people having fallen into fissures in the earth. The Deputy Commissioner reported that there were several apparently authenticated instances of persons having been swallowed up like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. In one case in Habiganj an old woman was sitting in an *akhra*,* when the ground opened exactly beneath her and she disappeared. In another case in Sunamganj, a man and his wife were standing on the bank of a river, when a fissure suddenly opened near the woman, into which she fell. The husband caught her by the hair to save her, but finding his own position insecure let go his hold. The woman sank into the crevasse, and her body was not recovered.

Damage to buildings.

The village of Jugirgaon, opposite Sunamganj, subsided into the river, and there were 39 casualties in this place alone. Joynagar Bazar suffered a like fate, and here too 29 deaths occurred. Sunamganj itself escaped, but most of the people, traders and pleaders, high and low, were so alarmed that they left on the morning of the 13th, or took up their residence in boats. Out of some 90 masonry buildings in the subdivision, only five or six were left standing, and nearly 6,000 reed and walled houses are said to have been destroyed. Most of these huts were,

* A kind of Vaishnavite monastery to which, however, women are admitted.

however, old and unsound, and would not in any case have lasted very much longer, so that under this head the material loss to the people was not large. Comparatively little damage was done to the district roads with the exception of the road from Sunamganj to Pagla, and from Salutikar to Companyganj. No less than six fine bridges on the latter road were ruined, and the light railway running from Companyganj to Therriaghat was wrecked. Considerable damage was also done to the Assam-Bengal Railway in the south of the district, as the banks had been but recently constructed and had not had time to be properly consolidated.

Fauna.

Elephants are sometimes found in the hilly country on the southern frontier of the district, but are far from common. The two horned rhinoceros is also said to have been seen in that locality, but is extremely rare. Tigers are not very common, though they are found both in the north and south of the district ; leopards are not so scarce. Wild buffalo are occasionally found in the swamps at the foot of the Khasi Hills, and wild pig, sambar (*cervus unicolor*), hog deer (*cervus porcinus*), and swamp deer (*cervus duvauceli*) can be shot in the same locality. Small game include various kinds of duck and teal, snipe, jungle fowl, and marsh partridge. In 1903 only three persons were killed by wild animals, *i.e.*, one by a tiger and two by wild pigs, but snakes were responsible for 75 deaths. Rewards were paid in that year for the destruction of 11 tigers and 10 leopards.

Statement A.

Thana.		No. of Marshes.
Sunamganj ...	Tahirpur	28
	Dharmapasha	40
	Dirai	31
	Sunamganj	70
	Jagannathpur	13
	Chhatak	25
Habiganj ...	Lakhai	7
	Madhabpur	5
	Baniyachung and Abidabad ...	10
	Habiganj	5
	Muchikandi	3
	Nabiganj	7
North Sylhet ..	Biswanath	6
	Balaganj	14
	Sylhet	7
	Fenchuganj	8
	Goyainghat	16
	Golapganj	1
	Kanairghat	16
South Sylhet ...	Maulavi Bazar	24
	Matiganj	11
	Rajnagar	27
Karimganj ...	Karimganj	31
	Ratabari and Patharkandi ...	4
	Jaldhub	94

Statement B.

Names of Haors.	*Pargana in which situated and approximate distance from Sylhet town.*
Banaiya	in Pargana Dulali or about 22 miles S. W. from Sylhet.
(1) Baram	in Pargana Baniyachung or about 40 miles S. W. W. from Sylhet.
Bar Haor	" " Muktarpur or about 12 miles S. E. from Sylhet.
Barsoula	" Parganas Baje Jatua and Dubalia or about 18 miles W. from Sylhet.
Barua	" Pargana Renga or about 10 miles S. S. E. from Sylhet.
(1) Benka	" " Baniyachung or about 40 miles S. W. W. from Sylhet.
Chatal	" " Gabarpur or about 12 miles S. from Sylhet.
Chaptihaor	" " Naigang or about 35 miles S. W. from Sylhet.
(2) Dekharhaor	" " Pagla or about 30 miles W. by N. from Sylhet.
Ghuldhuba	" " Baniyachung or about 35 miles S. W. from Sylhet.
Gungijuri	" " Mandarkandi or about 36 miles S. S. W. from Sylhet.
(1) Habibpur	" " Baniyachung or about 40 miles S. W. W. from Sylhet.
Hail or Baruna	in Pargana Chowalis or about 45 miles S. by W. from Sylhet.
Hailar haor	in Parganas Sukhair and Betal W. S. W. from Sylhet.
Hailka	in Pargana Regna or about 10 miles S. S. E. from Sylhet.
Hakaluki	" " Pathariya or about 22 miles S. E. from Sylhet.
(4) Jamaikata	" " Atuajan or about 25 miles W. S. W. from Sylhet.

Statement B—contd.

Names of Haors.	*Pargana in which situated and approximate distance from Sylhet town.*
(3) Jhinker haor in Pargana	Ichakalas or about 16 miles N. W. from Sylhet.
(3) Jilkar haor ,, ,,	Ichakalas or about 16 miles N. W. from Sylhet.
(2) Jawar ,, ,,	Lakhansiri or about 30 miles W. by N. from Sylhet.
Kagapasha ,, ,,	Baniyachung or about 35 miles S. W. from Sylhet.
Kawadighi ,, ,,	Samsernagar or about 25 miles S. W. from Sylhet.
Maijal ,, ,,	Gaharpur or about 12 miles S. from Sylhet.
(1) Maka ,, ,,	Baniyachung or about 40 miles S. W. W. from Sylhet.
(1) Makalkandi ,, ,,	Baniyachung or about 40 miles S. W. W. from Sylhet.
Makarsi ,, ,,	Muktarpur or about 17 miles S. from Sylhet.
(4) Mahai ,, ,,	Atuajan or about 25 miles W. S. W. from Sylhet.
Muktarpur ,, ,,	Muktarpur or about 12 miles S. E. from Sylhet.
(4) Nalua ,, ,,	Atuajan or about 25 miles W. S. W. from Sylhet.
(4) Parua ,, ,,	Atuajan or about 25 miles W. S. W. from Sylhet.
(5) Sanir haor ,, ,,	Laur or about 50 to 60 miles W. N. W. from Syhlet.
(2) Shurash ,, ,,	Duhalia or about 30 miles W. by N. from Sylhet.

Statement B—concld.

Names of Haors.	*Pargana in which situated and approximate distance from Sylhet town.*
Soulagarh in Pargana	Bajo Jutua or about 18 miles W. from Sylhet.
Sowlahaor " "	Baraya or about 6 miles E. from Sylhet.
(5) Tangua " "	Bangsikunda or about 50 to 60 miles W. N. W. from Sylhet.
Togarhaor " " (Ramdigha)	Selbaras or about 60 miles W. from Sylhet.

NOTE.—The numbers prefixed to certain names indicate that the haors bearing the same number are joined with one another when the floods are at their height and become large sheets of water interspersed with jungle.

CHAPTER II.

History.

Early history—Gaur—Laur and Baniyachaung—Koch invasions—The Jaintia Parganas—Sylhet under British rule—Khasi raids—Disputes on Cachar frontier—Riots at Sylhet—The Burmese war—Lushai raids—Floods—European settlers—The cowry currency—Development of excise system—Early salaries—Public buildings—Sylhet in 1837—The mutiny year—Archæological remains.

Early History.

Little is known of the history of Sylhet, but, like other countries in the early stages of civilization, it seems to have been split up into a number of petty chiefships. These were administered by little princelings, who enjoyed a certain degree of independence, though dominated at first by the Tippera State, and afterwards by the Muhammadans. The present Raja of Hill Tippera traces his family back to Drujho, one of the lunar race of kings, whose descendant Daitya is said to have fled after the battle of Kurukshetra to the jungles of Hill Tippera.* It is possible that the ancestors of the Raja originally came, as is alleged, from Central India; but there seems to be little doubt that the Tipperas are closely allied with the Bodo or Kacharis, and it is generally thought that a considerable portion of the present inhabitants of Sylhet were originally descended from that stock. With regard to the claim made by the royal family to more exalted lineage, it should be borne in mind that more than one matrimonial alliance has been made

* *Vide* report submitted to the Bengal Government by the Political Agent to Hill Tippera in 1875.

with the reigning houses of Cachar and Manipur, a fact which is not without its own significance.

A thousand years ago the Karimganj subdivision seems to have been included in the Tippera kingdom. In 640 A.D. the Raja wished to perform a sacrifice on an unusally imposing scale, and obtained five Brahmans from the Itwah village in Kanouj to preside over the ceremonies. Subsequently, with the object of retaining the holy men in this outlandish corner of the world, he gave them a grant of land which is said to have been situated in the Panchakhanda pargana in the Karimganj subdivision. This land was bounded on the north and west by the Kusiyara river, and on the south and east by the villages of Hankala Kukis, a tribe from which the Hakaluki *haor* is said to take its name.* Various tanks and old ruins in the South Sylhet subdivision are ascribed to the descendents of these colonists. In 1195 A.D. a Brahman named Nidhipati, who was descended from one of the five original immigrants from Kanouj, received a grant of land in what is now known as the Ita pargana, from the Tippera king. From this family sprung Bhanu Narayan, who was given the title of Raja as a reward for services rendered in the capture of a rebel. Tradition has it that his house was located on the site now occupied by the Rajnagar thana, and the large tank in the immediate vicinity is said to have been excavated by his orders. His eldest son, named Subid Narayan, built a fort on the

* A note prepared by Babu D. N. Chaudhuri is the authority for this statement and of the account given of Raja Subid Narayan. The copper plate, which is the authority for the grant, is said to be still in existence in Hill Tippera.

Barua hills to the east of the Ita pargana, the ruins of which are to be seen at the present day. A tank called Balda sagar was excavated at the instance of his daughter, but he is best known by the Sagar dighi, a large tank which he had dug, and on the banks of which he proposed to build his house. He was, however, suddenly attacked by a Pathan from Murshidabad named Khowaj Osman, and in disgust committed suicide while worshipping in the family temple. A few years later Khowaj Osman, the ruins of whose fort is still to be seen in the Ita hills in the Srisurjya mauza, rose in revolt with other zamindars, and seized parganas Ita, Taraf, and Sylhet, but was subdued by Lodi Khan, grandson of Surwar Khan.

Gaur or North Sylhet.

Gaur, or North Sylhet, was originally ruled by a line of Hindu kings. Nothing is known either of their dynasty or fortunes, and they were probably petty local princes with less power and influence than that enjoyed by a big zamindar of Bengal at the present day. The downfall of the last Raja, Gaur Gobind, is said to have been due to his severity towards a follower of the Prophet. This man had sacrificed a cow to celebrate the birth of a son. As the animal was being dismembered a kite swooped down, caught up a piece of flesh, and dropped it in the house of a holy Brahman. On the matter being reported to the king, he ordered the unfortunate infant to be killed and cut off the father's hand. The man applied to his co-religionists for help, and an army was despatched under Sikandar Shah, but met with no success. A second force was then sent under Sayed Nasir Dey, which was

accompanied by the famous fakir Shah Jalal. This man had been born in Yemen in Arabia, and had been sent by his uncle to Hindustan. He had been given a sample of earth and had been ordered to settle wherever he might find earth of the same character as the sample he took with him. Shah Jalal crossed the Brahmaputra and the Surma on a *mocholla* or praying seat, and proceeded to reduce Gaur Gobind by methods which no ordinary man could be expected to resist. The Hindu Raja had built himself a magical seven-storied tower, to which he retreated on the approach of the invaders. Shah Jalal each day offered up a solemn prayer, at the conclusion of which one of the stories of the tower collapsed. Gaur Gobind endured this mysterious destruction of his fortress for four days and then surrendered, and Shah Jalal, who, in the course of his prayers, had discovered that the earth of Sylhet resembled that of his uncle's sample, determined to take up his permanent abode in the newly conquered town. The administration of the country was made over to Sikandar Shah, and a mosque was erected for the great fakir who was really responsible for the victory. The mosque in which his bones now rest is regarded as a place of the greatest sanctity, and the tombs of his 360 disciples are still to be seen in almost every part of the town.* The defeat of Gaur Gobind took place in 1384 A. D., and from that time onward this portion of the district was ruled by the Muhammadans.

* The authorities on the subject of Shah Jalal are a note by Dr. Wise in J. A. S. B., Vol. 42, Pt. I., and an account of Sylhet written in 1874 by Sumbhoo Chunder Dey Munsif. Dr. Bloch is of opinion that the narrative of Shah Jalal's life is so thickly overgrown with fiction that it remains a matter of doubt whether he is a historical person at all. It is said that he died in 1195 A. D., and if this date is correct he obviously could have had nothing to do with the conquest of Sylhet.

Laur and Baniyachung.

At the time of the conquest of Sylhet by the Muhammadans, Laur, which is situated in the north-west corner of the district, was ruled by a line of Hindu princes.* This family traced its origin to a Brahman named Keshab Misra, who had left Kanouj to seek his fortunes in the east. One of his descendants, named Ramnath, had three sons, the eldest of whom remained at Laur, while the second had a palace built for him at Jagannathpur, and the youngest was established at Baniyachung. The eldest son had no descendants, and Durbar Khan, the head of the Jagannathpur branch, seized the whole of Laur, much to the disgust of Gobind Singh who was ruling at Baniyachung. On Durbar Khan's death, Gobind Singh endeavoured to obtain his share of Laur, but Durbar Khan's sons appealed to the Nawab of Murshidabad, who arrested Gobind Singh and carried him off to Murshidabad. There he was converted to the faith of Islam, and as a reward was given possession of the estates at Laur, though as a feudatory and no longer as an independent princeling. In 1744 A.D. Laur was burned by the Khasis, and many of the people moved to Baniyachung, where Abed Reza, the son of Gobind Singh, had already made his home. It was about this time that a tribute of 48 long boats was imposed on Baniyachung, and subsequently three-fourths of the estates were assessed to revenue. Abed Reza built a large fort in Laur, the ruins of which are to be seen at the present day, and his son Umed excavated a deep moat round Baniyachung. The descendants of this noble house are

* Most of the information embodied in the following paragraph is merely traditional, and has been supplied to me by Babu Padmanath Bhattacharya Bidyabinod, M.A.

still living in that village, but have lost their wealth and influence and are in very reduced circumstances.

Another version of the origin of Baniyachung is that a merchant, who was travelling with a crew of Chung or Namasudra boatmen, anchored in the *haor* over the site on which the village was subsequently built. An image of the goddess Kali was in the boat. During the night the merchant dreamed that the goddess declined to leave the place, and informed him that, if he would only settle there a Brahman would become the ruler of the town. The waters gradually disappeared, as they do at the present day on the cessation of the rains, and a village was founded by the pious merchant. The first Raja was a Brahman named Keshab Misra. One of his descendants, Gobind, quarrelled with the governor of Sylhet, and was summoned to Delhi where he embraced the moslem faith. The story of the Baniya and his Chungs would seem, however, to belong to the category of myths.

Koch invasions.

In the latter part of the sixteenth century Silarai, the brother of the great Koch king Nar Narayan, is said to have defeated the Raja of Sylhet. The territories of this prince were near those of the Jaintia Raja, and he is described as being a very powerful monarch. As has been already pointed out, Sylhet proper had been conquered by the Muhammadans two centuries before, but it is possible that the chronicler may be referring to the king of Laur, or to some quasi-independent Raja south of the

Kusiyara.* The battle lasted for three days, and was finally decided by a furious charge, headed by Silarai in person, in which the king himself and an immense number of his followers went down. His brother Asirai abandoned the unequal contest, and returned with Silarai to the court of Nar Narayan. The Koch prince restored to him his brother's kingdom, but imposed a tribute of 100 elephants, 200 horses, Rs. 3,00,000 and 10,000 gold coins, an assessment which must obviously have been a polite invention of the chronicler.†

Sylhet according to the Ain Akbari.

The account given of 'Sircar Sylhet' in the Ain Akbari is very brief, and is largely taken up with the description of two birds, a fact which suggests that the author of this, the earliest of Indian gazetteers, knew but little of his subject, or he would hardly have had recourse to such uninteresting padding. Sylhet is said to be "very mountainous,"—save the mark—and to furnish many eunuchs for the seraglios. The products mentioned are soontara, "a delicious fruit in colour like an orange but of an oblong form," China root, and lignum aloes, and the military strength is put down at 1,100 cavalry, 190 elephants, and 42,920 infantry.

The Jaintia Parganas.

The Jaintia Parganas are situated in the north-east corner of the district, and stretch from Therriaghat to the Cachar frontier

* The Muhammadans do not seem to have had a very firm grip upon their conquest and the Tipperas are said to have overrun Sylhet for a short time in the sixteenth century.

† The Koch King's of Kamarupa by E. A. Gait, Shillong, 1895, page 27.

along the base of the Jaintia Hills.* To the south they are roughly bounded by the Surma river—roughly, for pargana Satbank lies on the left side of that river, while between Golapganj and Sylhet there is a block of permanently settled land, which does not form part of Jaintia, extending as far north as Salutikar.

The territory of the Jaintia Rajas included, in addition to this portion of Sylhet, the hills inhabited by the Syntengs, and from time to time they succeeded in exercising some control over the country lying between the Jaintia Hills and the Kalang in the Assam Valley. How the Syntengs came to be united under a single ruler, while their neighbours and kinsmen on the west remained split up into a number of petty principalities, we do not know. History is equally silent with regard to the manner in which the Jaintia Rajas became the rulers and absolute owners of a tract of land in the plains of Sylhet, which at the present day is largely inhabited by Muhammadans. The royal family were of Synteng origin, and, though they had for many years been under the influence of Hinduism, they still retained the curious Khasi custom of inheritance through the female. This custom ultimately brought about their downfall, as it was the desire of the Raja's sister for a son that led to the kidnapping and sacrifice of British subjects.

* These fragments of Jaintia history prior to 1774 A. D. are taken from the Ahom Buranjis and a paper by Mr. E. A. Gait published in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. LXIV, Part I, No. 3, page 242.

List of Kings.

The following is a list of the Jaintia Rajas as recorded by tradition. Against the names of four of them have been inserted the dates at which from the evidence of coins, inscriptions, and the Ahom chronicles it appears that they were living :—

1. Parbat Ray.
2. Majha Gosain.
3. Burha Parbat Ray.
4. Bara Gosain.
5. Vijaya Manik.
6. Pratapa Ray.
7. Dhan Manik (1618 A. D.)
8. Jasa Manik.
9. Sundar Ray.
10. Chota Parbat Ray.
11. Jasamanta Ray.
12. Vana-Singh.
13. Pratapa-Singh.
14. Lakshmi-Narayana (1710 A. D.)
15. Ram-Singh.
16. Jaya-Narayana.
17. Bara Gosain (1731-1770 A. D.)
18. Chattra-Singh.
19. Vijaya-Narayana.
20. Rama-Singh (1813 A. D.)
21. Indra Singh.
22. Rajendra-Singh, until the annexation in 1835 A. D.

In the latter part of the sixteenth century, the Jaintia Raja, like the king of Sylhet, was reduced to a state of vassalage by the Koch king Nar Narayan. But the decline of the Koches was as rapid as their rise, and the Jaintia king must soon have succeeded in throwing off their yoke. According to tradition, the Raja was forbidden to mint coins in his own name; and this perhaps is why so few have been found which bear the name of the king in whose reign they were struck. The Jaintia coinage was made of unusually base metal, and two rupees which were assayed in 1836 were valued at 3 annas and 4 annas 9 pie respectively.

Conquest of Jaintia by Ahoms in 17th century.

Dhan Manik is said to have been at war with the Kacharis at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and, in order to enlist

the Ahoms on his side, offered to give his daughter to their Raja, Pratap Singh, if he would send to fetch her through the Kachari country. The ruse was successful, the Ahoms became involved in war with the Kacharis, and the Jaintia Raja was delivered from his enemies. His successor Jasa Manik, so the story goes, went to Kuch Bihar where he married a Koch princess. With her dowry he received the image of Jainteswari, or Kali, which subsequently attained so evil a notoriety on account of the human sacrifices offered to it, sacrifices which ultimately led to the downfall of the Raja. At the beginning of the eighteenth century Ram Singh, the Raja of that time, kidnapped the Raja of Cachar, who had retired through the hills before the armies of the greatest of the Ahom kings, Rudra Singh. The Kachari prince applied to his former enemy for help, armies were despatched through the North Cachar and Jaintia Hills, the two princes were arrested and taken to the Assam Valley, and Jaintia was annexed to the Ahom territories. The Raja himself has no claim upon our sympathies, as he seems to have been entirely responsible for his own discomfiture. But, then as ever, it was a case of *quidquid delirant reges plectuntur Achivi*, and the fate of his wretched subjects was truly lamentable. Jaintiapur was plundered and burnt, about a thousand persons were tortured to death, and even the women were not spared but were deprived of their ears and noses.* Rudra Singh formally notified the Muhammadan fauzdar of Sylhet that Jaintia had passed into his possession, and the two Governments prepared to exchange lists of the

* An Ahom chronicle is the authority for this statement.

products of their respective countries, with the object of facilitating trade. But though their monarch had submitted, the hardy mountainers, over whom his rule was ever of the lightest, declined to accept an alien yoke. They rose as one man, butchered the Ahom garrisons in the hills, and resumed their former free and easy life. The Jaintia Raja died in captivity, but his heir was established on the throne, and the Ahoms made no further attempt to exercise an effective jurisdiction over the territory entrusted to him. Communications were, however, maintained between the two valleys, and in 1757, envoys from Jaintia are said to have been received by the Ahom king in the portico of the Hajo temple, and to have complained that the Sonapur duar had been closed by the Khairam Raja. The king ordered it to be opened as trade between the valley and the hills was doubtless highly advantageous to both parties.

First intercourse with British and annexation in 1835.

The first occasion on which the Jaintia Parganas were entered by the British was in 1774 A.D. when Major Henniker led a force against the Raja. The causes which provoked this expedition are not on record, but some years afterwards the Collector comments on the excellent effect produced, and on the correct attitude of the Jaintia people towards our frontier as compared with the insolent violence of the Khasis.

In 1821, some emissaries from this State were detected in the act of kidnapping British subjects, with the object of sacrificing them at the shrine of Kali. One of the culprits admitted that human sacrifices had been

annually offered for at least ten years, in the hope that the sister of the Raja might, through the intercessions of the goddess Kali, be blessed with offspring. The princess was always present on the occasion of each sacrifice, and bathed her person in the blood of the victim, whose throat was cut by the officiating priest.* Suitable punishment was meted out, and a solemn warning was given to the Raja that any repetition of this offence would be followed by the confiscation of his territories. In 1824, he entered into an agreement with Mr. David Scott by which he acknowledged himself to be dependant on the British Government, and pledged himself to abstain from entering into any negotiation with a foreign power. Three years later, a second attempt was made upon the liberties of British subjects, and in 1832, a similar attempt was at last crowned with success. Three out of the four men seized were sacrificed to Kali; the fourth escaped and reported the outrage to the authorities. The Raja was called upon to deliver up the culprits, and, as he declined to do so, his territories in the plains were annexed in 1835.

Sylhet under British rule.

The rest of Sylhet passed into the hands of the East India Company in 1765. The first resident to be appointed was Mr. Thackeray, the grandfather of the famous novelist, who built a large house near the site on which the bungalow of the Deputy Commissioner now stands. He was succeeded by Mr. Holland, who made a regular settlement of the district; and in 1779 came Mr. Robert Lindsay, who acted as Collector for upwards of ten years, and of

* Asiatic Journal, Vol. XIII, p. 177.

whose administration there is an interesting account in the Lives of the Lindsays. A British district has obviously no history which can be reproduced in a condensed form in chronological tables. Many years are barren of incident, the crops are sown and reaped, the traders come and go, one generation gradually melts into another and there is nothing for the chronicler to report. The laws which govern the actions of the people are passed elsewhere, the orders by which the Collector of Sylhet is guided are issued at Dacca and Calcutta, the district is part of a corporate whole and is no longer a separate entity, to work out its ruin or salvation for itself. At the same time, interesting letters can be found which enable us to trace the gradual development of the administration, and in the following pages reference is made to such arrangements or events as seem of interest. No allusion has been made to the land revenue history, as this extremely complicated subject is dealt with in the chapter on land revenue.

Frontier troubles. The Khasis.

Under Mughal, and for some time under British rule, Sylhet was a frontier district, and was exposed to all the inconveniences that such a position usually entails. The Khasis were a continual source of trouble to the Muhammadans, and it was not long before they came into collision with the British. Difficulties seem to have first arisen in 1779. A letter from the Collector in that year refers to the value of the trade between Calcutta and Panduah, a village situated near Bholaganj, which a hundred years ago occupied the position which is enjoyed by Chhatak at the

present day. The Khasis seem to have been encouraged to adopt an offensive attitude by the conduct of some 'low Europeans,' who had treated them with undue deference; and Mr. Lindsay was compelled to ask for sanction to the construction of a small fort, surrounded by a brick wall, which would afford protection to the merchants. The first serious outbreak, after Sylhet came under British rule, occurred in 1783, when the Khasis demanded the head of a havildar, whom they charged with having treated them with contumely. This calm request was naturally refused, whereupon they attacked the thana, and there was "considerable loss on both sides." Mr. Lindsay's own lime works did not escape, and his servants, so he says, were cut to pieces. Four years later the Khasis of Laur joined forces with the people inhabiting the submontane tracts; ravaged the parganas of Atgram, Selbaras, Bangsikunda, Ramdiga and Betal, and put to death upwards of 300 people.* Troops were despatched without delay to the foot of the hills, but they found that the raiders had already retreated to their mountain strongholds.

The Khasis and Mr. Willes.

A few months later Mr. Lindsay left Sylhet, and the office of Collector was assumed by Mr. John Willes, a gentleman who does not seem to have been endowed by nature with the character and temper that are best adapted for the administration of a turbulent and frontier district. At the end of 1788 a Khasi freebooter, named Ganga Singh, plundered the bazar and thana at Ishamati, and put to death one Bara Chaudri with his family. A native officer was then

* Collector's letter No. 84, dated 26th October 1787.

deputed to enquire into the condition of the submontane tracts, and he reported that the people had been reduced by the Khasis to a state of abject misery and were living on grass and fish.* Panduah was garrisoned by a force of sepoys, but in June 1789, the Khasis made a bold attack upon the place, and killed several of the rank and file. Two European merchants who were staying in the village escaped with difficulty, and the thanadar was at first reported to be killed. Mr. Willes at once addressed the Government at Calcutta, but seems to have been reluctant to take any action on his own responsibility. A force was sent to relieve Panduah which achieved its object, to the great satisfaction of the Collector, "without bloodshed," and in all his dealings with these savages he unfortunately displayed a mildness of character which only confirmed them in their lawless inclinations. His temper can be judged from a letter to Lieutenant Cheape, who was in command of the sepoys on the frontier, in which the following sentences occur: "I must conclude in entreating you in the strongest terms to shew in future all possible lenity to such persons as may be so unfortunate as to be wounded. . . . . I further entreat you that in no instance the sepoys be allowed to fire on any person except when in the direct act of opposition."

The Collector admitted to the Supreme Government that he had no authority on the northern frontier of his district, and that, if he were to summon the Khasi sirdar of any of the 137 villages cultivated by the Sylhet raiyats, "he would refuse to obey, threaten, and probably cut off

* Collector's letter No. 123, dated 19th February 1789.

the head of the messenger, and then call down his relations from the hills to revenge what he would consider an insult." But while making these admissions, he does not seem to have been fully sensible of the desirability of making some attempt, at any rate, to assert the Company's authority. Some of his observations on the policy to be adopted were just enough. He pointed out that, since Major Henniker's expedition into Jaintia in 1774, the people of that country had abstained from raids into Sylhet, that submission and conciliatory measures had merely incited the savages to further violence, and that the Khasis must be taught that they were attacking the Company, and not the fauzdar of Sylhet, with whom in the times of the Mughals they seem to have carried on an intermittent warfare. He was, however, better in council than in action, and he does not seem to have made any attempt to personally suppress the disorders in his district. "Punishment," he wrote to Lord Cornwallis, "can hereafter be given, but that should not be attempted rashly by a Collector, whose passions may be engaged, whose motive may be suspected, and whose character may be implicated." He concluded by requesting that the Governor-General would act on his own discretion, as he, the Collector, was not well acquainted with the condition of the Khasis. Troops were, however, despatched to Panduah who quieted the hillmen for a time, but in 1795, the Khasis again raided on the plains.

Ultimate pacification.

In 1799, the Collector reported that the district had been freed from the vexatious inroads of the hillmen, and proposed that the submontane parganas should be measured up, as this

work had been left undone by Mr. Willes owing to the unsettled condition of the frontier. The Khasis seem at this time to have given little trouble, and in 1825 a medical man was deputed to report on Cherra Punji; but two years later a sepoy, a *dâkwallah*, and a *dhobi* were murdered by the hillmen in the neighbourhood of Panduah. The Collector of that time was not the man to tolerate such outrages, and in the absence of the Agent to the Governor-General, he took upon himself to request the officer commanding the Sylhet Light Infantry to retaliate on the parties concerned, and, if they were in open arms against the Honb'le Company, to take such steps as might be necessary for their restraint. The steps taken seem to have been sufficient, but in 1831, two years after the massacre at Nongkhlao, a raid was made upon the village of Kanta Kal. The raiders were dispersed by the Sylhet Light Infantry under Captain Lister, and since that date the Khasis have ceased to be a source of anxiety or embarrasment to the Administration.

Disputes on Cachar frontier.

Trouble was, however, experienced on the eastern as well as on the northern frontier. In 1799, a Mughal, named Aga Muhammad Reza, entered Cachar from Sylhet, and for a time seems to have succeeded in making himself master of that country. He seduced the Naga Kukis from their allegiance, cut up some *borkandazes* sent against him by the Raja, and compelled that prince to take refuge in the hills. He then assumed the character and attributes of a prophet, styled himself Immaum Mehadri, and sent 1,200 of his followers to attack the Company's thana at Bondassye. This thana was garrisoned by one havildar and

eight sepoys. The Kacharis are said to have attacked this small force with 300 men and two three-pounder guns, but they were repulsed with some loss, after a smart engagement. The attack was renewed under the personal direction of the prophet, but in the meanwhile the thana garrison had been reinforced by 70 sepoys, and the Kacharis were driven back, with a loss of 90 men and 5 small pieces of cannon. Their leader made his escape, but was subsequently arrested, and peace and tranquillity were soon restored. So strong, however, had been his influence that many Hindus in the eastern portion of Sylhet are said to have abjured their faith and turned Muhammadan.

Disputes with Raja of Cachar.

A few years later disputes arose with regard to the boundary between Sylhet and Cachar. In 1807, a line was laid down by an *amin*, but very shortly after the completion of the work, the Raja's people trespassed upon the estate of one Mooluck Chund, filled up the ditches which had been dug along the boundary, and carried off the crops. An *amin* was again deputed to lay down the line, but, as soon as the crops ripened for the following harvest, the Raja's people again appeared upon the scene. Raids were also made on pargana Chapghat, and the crops were forcibly cut and carried off. Stringent orders were accordingly issued to the native officer at the Badarpur thana to 'prevent these savage intruders from committing such ravages'; but subsequently it was found that Mooluck Chund's title to the land was very doubtful, and it appeared that the line laid down by the *amin* included a portion of the Raja's territory.

Trouble, however, was experienced from within as well as on the frontier. The natives of the district were turbulent and unruly, and, as is not unfrequently the case in frontier tracts, had little respect for the majesty of the law. In 1779, a havildar and ten sepoys were despatched to put an auction purchaser in possession of his newly acquired estates in Balisira. The former proprietor resisted the officers of the law by force, killed two and wounded several others, and effectually prevented them from carrying out their orders. Not content with this, he proceeded to plunder two boats loaded with upwards of two thousand rupees worth of cowries, the property of Government. A stronger force was then sent from Sylhet which succeeded in giving the auction purchaser possession, and the former owner fled. But he fled only to return again with a large body of men, who surprised and fired the cutcherry, cut down the sepoys who offered them resistance, and made the others prisoner. The outlaw was, however, compelled again to fly, and was subsequently arrested by the authorities at Dacca.

Internal commotions.

Three years later there was a serious outbreak during the *Maharram* at Sylhet, of which the following account was given by Mr. Lindsay :—*

Riots at Sylhet in 1782.

"At this last place (Sylhet) the Musalmans had become uncommonly violent. The period of the *Maharram*, or annual festival of the Islam faith, was approaching, when a deputation from the Hindu inhabitants came privately to inform me that

* *Vide* Statistical Account of Assam, Vol. II, page 355.

they had certain intelligence that the Mahammadans meditated an assault upon our Government on that day, and that it would likely commence by an attack on the Hindu temples in the town. I told them that I could not believe it, as they had hitherto shown no indication of riot. My military force at that time being a good deal scattered in the Province, not more than forty or fifty men could be mustered fit for duty, and I desired my *jemadar*, or black officer, to have all in readiness in case of a fray. Nothing occurred during the day of the festival, until five in the evening, when the Hindu inhabitants rushed into my house in numbers, covered with marks of violence they had received from Mahammadans. I went into my room for a few minutes, dressed my pistols and gave them to my favourite black servant, desiring him to keep near me, and, if he saw me in danger, to put them into my hand. I carried a light horseman's sword under my arm. There was no time for delay, as the town was on fire in different directions. With my small force I marched to the place where the crowd was collected, and found to my surprise that the numbers were much more considerable than I expected As I advanced they retired to a strong position upon a hill, and there took post. I followed them to the top, and drew up my sepoys on a table-ground directly opposite to them, where they stood with shouldered arms. I then went forward with my black officer to hold a parley on the spot. I found their leader a priest of considerable rank, at the head of three hundred men. He was insolent in his manner. I was perfectly calm. I told him that I presented myself before him in the capacity of Head Magistrate; that I was informed a fray had happened, which I would investigate next day, and render justice where due; that my object at that moment was to compel him to lay down his arms and retire peaceably. He immediately drew his sword, and exclaiming with a loud voice, "This is the day to kill or to die,—the reign of the English is at an end!" aimed a heavy blow at my head. This I was fortunate enough to parry; but he struck so hard that my sword was broken, and a little more than the hilt remained in my hand. My black servant at the same moment thrust a pistol into my hand, which I instantly fired, and the priest fell; and so close were we in contact that his clothes were set on fire. My sepoys in the rear, seeing my dangerous situation, discharged a platoon while I stood in front, from which I miraculously escaped. My black officer and I rushed back into the ranks in time to prevent their giving way. We then charged with bayonets and drove the armed multitude over the hill.

"I had now time to look about me and survey the mischief that had been done in so short a time. The high priest and his two brothers were lying dead on the ground, and many of his dependents were wounded. On my side one sepoy was killed and six wounded. Most fortunately my people did not give way—if they had, every European in the place would have fallen. I now asked for my assistant, Mr.—, who I supposed had been killed; he soon appeared, and candidly informed me that the scene was too much for his nerves, and that he had retired during the combat. This event was of too serious a nature not to be reported to Government. They immediately ordered a reinforcement of troops, supposing me under temporary difficulty; but the tumult soon subsided, and the order was countermanded."

Raids on the east and north.

Mr. Lindsay was a firm and resolute Collector, but the strength of his conviction that there would be no renewal of the disturbances, and his refusal of the proffered reinforcements, suggests that the number of rioters who fell was larger than he felt disposed to say. Again in 1786, one Radha Ram, a zamindar on the eastern frontier of the district, attacked the Chargola thana, with a following of Kukis, and killed and harried the villagers. Mr. Lindsay promptly despatched some sepoys to the place with instructions to burn the villages of Radha Ram's people, and to lift his cattle; and in a very short time the zamindar himself was seized. The letter that reports his capture to Mr. (afterwards Sir John) Shore curtly announces the annoying fact that a tribe of hillmen had surprised the thana of Laur, killed the thanadar and twenty of his men, and made their way back into their mountain fastnesses. During the declining days of Mughal rule the administration had been lax, and it was some years before the people learned that the authority of the Company could not be set at defiance with impunity. The fact that at this time there

were neither criminal nor civil courts in Sylhet was also said to be a source of difficulty. Suitors had to proceed to Sultansi which was a considerable distance from their homes.

Burmese War in 1824.

The aggressive conduct of the Burmese in 1824 caused some anxiety in Sylhet. Troops were at once pushed up to the frontier fort at Badarpur, and, when the enemy approached, they advanced into Cachar and inflicted a severe defeat upon them at Bikrampur. The Burmese then withdrew, but in June it was reported that they were again advancing, and, in spite of the inclement weather, reinforcements were hastily despatched towards the frontier. Sylhet itself escaped the inconvenience of a raid, but great difficulty was experienced in obtaining transport for the expedition. Boats, which had to be sent up to Badarpur, were manned by 50 persons, most of whom were witnesses who were waiting to give evidence at the cutcherry and had been summarily impressed! "With the greatest difficulty and by subjecting our own subjects to the most dreadful privations and sufferings" 7,000 men were gradually collected, but they charged the guards who were set over them, and broke through every opposition. Apart from their reluctance to accompany the expedition, the Commissioner doubted whether the coolies would be able to carry to Manipur more than the provisions required for their own consumption on the way. The people fled panic stricken from their homes to escape impressment, the fields remained untilled, and the Magistrate was compelled to warn the General in Command that famine might ensue. Stories of the impressment of

the people travelled up to the Khasi Hills, and added to the difficulty of obtaining labour when the road to Assam was being constructed in 1829. The Khasis are, and always have been, an extremely independent people, and the accounts they heard of the way in which coolies had been seized in Sylhet at first rendered them disinclined to do any work for Government.

Raids from the South. Kuki outrage in 1826.

About the time that Sylhet was freed from the fear of marauding raiders from the north, the wild tribes from the southern hills began to make incursions on the plains. The first outrage on record occurred in 1826, when a party of wood-cutters was murdered by Kukis. Messengers were sent up into the hills, and ascertained that the cause of the outrage was the failure of the zamindars of Pratapgarh to make their customary presents to the tribesmen. The Kukis took this opportunity of clearly laying their demands before the Government, and detained two of the envoys as hostages, while the third was sent to fetch the ransom of the other two. Government paid the money to obtain the release of its two emissaries, and orders were issued for the exclusion of the Kukis from our markets.

Twenty men killed in 1844.

In 1844, Sylhet was the scene of a far more serious outrage. Laru, a Poithu chief of some importance, died, and his son Lal Chokla determined to give him a funeral worthy of his merits. On April 16th, he descended upon the Manipuri colony of Kochabari in Pratapgarh, and in the darkness of the night succeeded in securing twenty heads

and six living captives. Efforts were made to obtain redress through the Raja of Hill Tippera, and when they proved fruitless, an expedition was despatched, under Captain Blackwood, into the hills. He succeeded in arresting Lal Chokla, who was brought down to the plains, tried, and sentenced to transportation for life, in spite of his plea that he did not know that the Manipuris were under British protection, a plea in which very little reliance could be placed.

Raids in 1847 and 1849 followed by Colonel Lister's expedition.

Three years later the Kukis again descended from their hills, and massacred upwards of 150 persons. After prolonged investigation, it was ascertained that the scene of the outrage lay outside British territory, and it was left to the Raja of Hill Tippera, in whose country the incident occurred, to take such action as he thought to be desirable. Further raids were, however, made within the boundaries of the district in 1849, and, as even more serious outrages were reported from Cachar, Government determined to send an expedition into the hills. A force was despatched under Colonel Lister which captured one village and then withdrew, as the officer in command did not consider that it was sufficiently strong to justify his advancing further through such difficult country, against so powerful an enemy.

Further raids followed by abortive expedition of 1869.

In 1862, Sylhet was raided again, three villages about eight miles from Adampur were plundered and burnt, and a large number of the inhabitants massacred and carried off. Government ordered that a strong force of armed

police should be established somewhere on the Sylhet frontier, and pressure was put upon the Raja of Hill Tippera, as it was thought that his subjects were to some extent responsible for these raids. At the end of 1868, a village near Adampur was again attacked, and as this was only one of several outrages along the southern frontier of the Province, an expedition was despatched into the hills. The climatic conditions were, however, most unfavourable, the central column was detained by seven days' continuous rain which rendered the route impracticable, and the troops were compelled to retire without either rescuing the captives or punishing the guilty tribes.

Raids in 1871.

In January 1871, the village of Kacharipara near the Chargola outpost was burnt, and 20 persons killed, and an attack was made on another village immediately opposite to the outpost. Five weeks later a village near the Alinagar outpost was raided ; but these were merely incidents in the general outbreak that occurred along the frontier. Such continuous and sanguinary raids called for vigorous repressive measures, and in 1871-72, a strong force was sent into the Lushai Hills, the troops advancing in two columns from Cachar and Chittagong. Since that date the peace of the Sylhet district has been undisturbed, though further outrages on other portions of the Indian Empire rendered the annexation of the Lushai Hills a disagreeable but unavoidable necessity.

The history of the Lushais and their raids will be found in greater detail in the gazetteer of the Lushai Hills, and reference has only here been made to the

comparatively small number of outrages perpetrated in Sylhet.

Floods and bunds.

Towards the latter end of the eighteenth century the district suffered from a succession of heavy floods, which, if implicit reliance can be placed upon the records, produced effects of the most appalling character.

In 1781, the country was desolated by an inundation which is described by Mr. Lindsay in the following terms: *

"In 1781, and also in the preceding year, there had never been such bountiful crops of rice, insomuch that the granaries could not contain it, and the value of the commodity was so extremely depreciated that it would not pay the expense of carrying it to market. I was, therefore, under the necessity of stating to Government the total inability of the farmers to pay their rents, especially as, in this poor district, they had not the same resources as elsewhere, rice being our only source of revenue. A suspension of rent was in consequence allowed. No sooner was the indulgence granted than one of those dreadful inundations took place to which the country is subject, which in a few weeks involved the whole country in general calamity. The river, from being very low, rose thirty feet perpendicular, overflowing its banks and sweeping everything before it. A more dreadful scene could not be imagined, nor could relief be given to the numerous objects who were seen perishing in the torrent,—the cattle and wild animals of every description were observed indiscriminately floating down the stream. The granaries upon the banks, filled with the late superabundant harvest, were all swept into the flood, and thus from a general plenty we were in the course of ten days reduced to a state of famine. All was gone excepting a few partial stores on the high grounds. The first thing I did was to despatch express boats in every direction, to bring back the grain we had sent from the Province sometime before, now finding its way to distant markets. In this we succeeded, and part was brought back, but we had a dreadful prospect before us: the greater part of the last year's

* *Vide* Statistical Account of Assam, Vol. II, page 354.

crop was destroyed, and, what was worse, the rice lately planted was so completely laid under water that it could offer no hope of relief.

"My own case was embarrassing, for I had now to give the Supreme Board an account directly opposite to that I had lately furnished. Government, however, immediately assisted us; but at the same time, my story appeared so very improbable that they sent up a confidential person to report to them, from ocular demonstration, the actual state of the country. From the scarcity that prevailed, this gentleman never reached me; but his report of the desolation and misery he saw in the lower country fully corroborated my previous statements, and Government, in consequence, gave much assistance, but I am sorry to say nearly one-third of the population died.

"I must here mention one instance of the industry of the people at this juncture. They sent up and brought rice plants from the seed beds on the high grounds; but, their low lands being under water, they were obliged to plant them in a manner not altogether new, but seldom practised, and to which I was frequently an eye-witness. The work is carried on in canoes. In one end of the boat were deposited the rice plants, on the other side a heap of well-tempered tenacious clay; the boatman, holding two or three rice plants in his left hand, attached to each a lump of clay and dropped it into the water; it thus became anchored in eighteen inches of water. Many hundred acres of ground were thus cultivated; and this furnished in due time a considerable resource, so as to save many of the inhabitants from famine. In the situation so described, provided the flood during the periodical rains rises gradually, the plant will grow to the height of twelve or fourteen feet, always keeping its head above water; but if rapidly overflowed and depressed under water, even for one night only, it never recovers.

"Upon going to Dacca a few months afterwards, I saw many instances of men and women diving from their canoes to tear up from the bottom roots of grass and other vegetables as a miserable food for their famished cattle. Nor were the sufferings of the unfortunate natives yet ended. When the new crop was nearly ready for use, no persuasion could prevent them from satisfying their craving appetites, the frequent consequence of which was immediate death, or diseases which occasioned dropsy and dysentery, which destroyed many."

More floods in 1785.

Three years later there were again complaints of flood. The waters, according to the Collector, rose to a height to which they had never before attained within the memory of man, the houses in the town were most of them submerged, and large quantities of cattle and many human beings perished.* In September, it was said that the country from the banks of the Brahmaputra to Sylhet was like an open sea, dotted over with islands on which the people were living in a pitiable state ; that two-thirds of the cattle had died, and that the villagers were endeavouring to save the lives of the remainder by diving to the bottom and scraping up weeds and roots of grass. Early next year, Mr. Lindsay told the Board that over two-thirds of the cattle had been swept away and drowned, or starved from want of fodder, and, that one-fourth of the inhabitants of the low lands had perished, either from starvation, or from the diseases that are commonly induced by unwholesome or insufficient food.† In 1787, the Collector again reported a very serious flood,—the low parganas were entirely under water, the greater part of the cattle were drowned, and those that survived were kept on bamboo rafts. "The face of the whole country exhibits an extensive sea, and, where villages formerly stood, may be seen at a distance little mounds rising out of the waters, which on a nearer approach are perceived to be the wrecks of the habitations of the distressed raiyats. It is painful to recall to your recollection the distress of 1784, at the thought of which humanity

* Collector's letter No. 46, dated 25th June 1784.

† Collector's letter No. 56, dated 13th March 1785.

shudders, but the waters are higher now than they ever were at any period of that year, and the damage is infinitely greater."* There were heavy floods also in 1793 and again in 1795.

Protective works.

Under native rule the Surma had been protected by a dyke, but this work had been allowed to fall into disrepair, and in 1790, Mr. Willes constructed an embankment for a length of about one hundred miles along the side of that river. Six years before, the Supreme Government had sanctioned the expenditure of Rs. 8,000, on the repair of bunds along the Surma, Kusiyara and Manu,† and dykes were also kept in repair by native land-holders at their own expense. In 1814, the idea seems to have gained ground that these bunds were of comparatively little use. They were accordingly allowed to fall into disrepair, and, at the present day, the only one maintained is a dyke along a portion of the Surma river. The annual rainfall is so enormous, the general level of the country is so low, and the whole drainage system is of such a complicated character, that it is extremely difficult to control the action of the rivers. Nullahs and embankments that protect one village may very possibly do damage to another, and the greatest caution has to be exercised when tampering with the drainage of the country.

Were these floods really so severe?

It is difficult to understand why, at the end of the eighteenth century, Sylhet should have been so much more liable to flood than it is at the present day. It is possible that the whole level of the district has been raised during

* Collector's letter No. 80, dated 11th July 1787.

† No. 38 A. from J. Shore, dated 30th December 1784.

the last hundred years; it is possible that there was a cycle of exceptionally wet years, just as at the end of the nineteenth century, the rainfall throughout India was exceptionally scanty; and lastly it is possible that the floods in reality were not abnormally severe, and that what so impressed the imagination of Mr. Lindsay was little more than the usual condition of the country. At the present day almost the whole of the western portion of the district goes under water in the rains. Fodder for the cattle is brought from the hills, or dragged from the bottom as described by the Collector, and the houses of the villagers are crowded together on small islets of high-land, which rise up here and there from out of the waste of waters. It is difficult to obtain reliable information with regard to the condition of the people now, it was almost impossible to do so then, and the estimates of mortality, both of men and cattle, were doubtless much exaggerated. The people had the strongest disinclination to pay land revenue, and clutched at any excuse which would relieve them from the necessity of doing so. Even a strong officer like Robert Lindsay experienced the greatest difficulty in realizing the demand, and he was naturally not disposed to minimise any calamity which would help to explain away the large outstanding balances. On more than one occasion the rainfall may possibly have been severe, but it is to be hoped that the sufferings of the people were not so terrible as was supposed.

The rice rates however show that there was some distress.

That there was some distress and scarcity there seems little doubt. In 1788, Mr. Willes reported that rice was selling at Re. 1-8 per maund, though in former years four maunds could be purchased for one

rupee. Such was the general distress that he could not stir from his house without being beset by thousands clamouring for relief.* It must, however, be added that four maunds for a rupee was an exceptionally low rate. In 1786, when rice sold at four and a half maunds to the rupee, the price was said to be so low as barely to cover the cost of cooly hire to the bazar, and in January 1798, the best rice sold at Sylhet for As. 12 a maund. Owing, no doubt, to difficulties of transport, the grain market at that time was subject to sharp variations. Corners in wheat would have had but a short shrift from the administrators of that day. In 1773, the Collector was authorised to notify by beat of drum, that any merchant who concealed his grain and refused to bring it to the market and sell it at a reasonable price, would not only be deprived of all his stock, but would be placed in confinement till orders had been passed upon his case. As a precaution against scarcity the Government had recourse to public granaries, and more than once the Collector was directed to purchase and store a lakh or two of maunds of grain.

European settlers in Sylhet.

The efforts made by France to retain some share of the valuable Indian trade, are illustrated by the action of a certain M. DeChampigny. This gentleman seems to have come to Sylhet in 1786, with letters of introduction from M. Wilton, the French Commissary. Mr. Lindsay informed the Governor-General that no obstacle would be placed in M. DeChampigny's way, as long as he conducted himself as a private trader. At the same time he pointed out that

* Collector's No. 19, dated 11th February 1788.

the French had never had a public agent in that portion of Bengal, and that they were naturally of an intriguing disposition; and he hinted pretty plainly that the Frenchman's actions in a turbulent and frontier district, surrounded by savage races who could easily be incited to invade our territory, would always call for careful attention from the Government. M. DeChampigny seems to have lived with Mr. Lindsay, and, during the administration of that vigorous pro-consul, he was wise enough to conceal his real intentions. On the advent of Mr. Willes he ventured to appear in his true colours. He purchased a plot of ground in a very arbitrary manner, the title of the vendor being extremely doubtful. He then began the construction of a fine bungalow, without applying for the consent of Government, as was required by the regulations then in force. When he was in need of stores from the interior, he issued orders on the people under a large seal; and he claimed to be exempted from the rules that applied to all other traders, under which boats carrying merchandise were compelled to attend at the bunder ghat for registration. He is said to have seized, confined, and fined those persons who offended him. On one occasion he arrested a taluqdar, and, when ordered by the Collector to release him, his servants impudently denied that their master was in any way subject to the authority of Mr. Willes. But, worst of all, he endeavoured to establish political relations with the Khasis, an arrangement to which there were the strongest possible objections. The Khasi Hills were independent territory, Assam and Cachar were still under native rule, and there was serious risk that the French might establish a protectorate on our frontier, which would be a perpetual

source of danger and annoyance. The records are silent with regard to the ultimate fate of this imperious Frenchman. On the outbreak of war in 1804, he probably had to flee the country ; but, for a time at any rate, he was a source of serious annoyance and anxiety to the unhappy Mr. Willes.

In spite of the restrictions imposed on settlers in the interior, there were a considerable number of Europeans in Sylhet a century and more ago. In 1778, Mr. Lindsay despatched two Englishmen, a Frenchman, and a Portuguese to Dacca, 'as no confidence could be placed in them,' and there were still some fourteen Europeans left, who had absconded, apparently from fear that they might share the fate of the other four. In 1799, there were no less than forty-four non-official Europeans in the district. The most important was, of course, the famous M. De Champigny, but numerically the strongest community were the Greeks, no less than thirty-one of whom were engaged in selling salt. They were altogether a distinctly cosmopolitan crew, which, in addition to the Greeks, included three Frenchmen, one Deluc, whose nationality is not specified but who presumably was not English, and a Dutchman who is described as very old and dumb. One cannot help wondering what an old and speechless Dutchman could have been doing in Sylhet a century ago.

The Currency.

In the early days of our administration the revenue of the district was paid in cowries. As Mr. Lindsay says, it is difficult to understand how they became the circulating medium of a country three hundred miles distant from the

sea. The only explanation he could offer was that the people were so poor, and their rents so small, that a currency of extremely low value was required. The rate of exchange varied at different times, but, in Mr. Lindsay's day, four *kahans* or 5,120 cowries went to a rupee, and, as the revenue amounted to Rs. 2,50,000, the Collector had to receive nearly 1,300 millions of these little shells. The inconvenience of such a currency was indescribable. The cowries were generally received in baskets, and when they changed hands, the baskets were divided into groups of ten. The payee then counted one basket in each group, and, whatever deficiency was found in that basket, was supposed to run through the remaining nine. They were not received by weight, as the addition of a little sand would at once have turned the scale, nor by measure, as a little shaking made them settle down. They were fragile, and the Government of Bengal found it necessary to import shells, at a cost of more than a lakh of rupees per annum, to replace those lost and broken in the Presidency.* They were cumbersome to receive, and troublesome alike to store in Sylhet, or to export to Dacca. Efforts were accordingly made by Government to induce the landholders to pay their revenue in rupees, and by 1819, two-thirds of the people had agreed to do so, and only 30,000 *kahans* of cowries were in store. This result was not attained without much difficulty. The price of cowries was raised by declining to issue them from the treasury, and at one time the Collector had nearly 1,100 millions of

* Letter No. 164 A., dated 9th September 1819, from the Board of Revenue to the Collector. The Collectors of Customs at the three seaports reported that 43,000 maunds of cowries were imported every year.

these little shells in the godowns at Sylhet. Arrangements were made to send them to other districts, to distribute them as diet money to prisoners, and to sell them locally; and gradually this medium of circulation, which assuredly must have been one of the very worst on earth, was banished from the district.

Development of the excise system.

It is interesting to trace the development of the excise revenue in the early days of British rule, and the small beginnings from which the present system was built up. The consumption of spirituous liquor was naturally regarded with some disfavour by the Muhammadans, a tax of 5 *kahans* or about two rupees, was imposed on each maund landed at Sylhet, and each retail vendor paid a small registration fee of Re. 1 per annum.* For some years after our assumption of the administration no attempt seems to have been made to obtain any revenue from excise, ; but in 1793 the Collector, under pressure from the Board of Revenue, issued licenses to four distillers. The fees received only amounted to Rs. 42, whether per mensem or per annum is not quite clear; but the actual incidence of the fees was not of much importance, as shortly after receiving their licenses, all the vendors disappeared. Further enquiries led the Collector to report that liquor was only drunk by the fishermen near Ajmiriganj; but in 1798, he complained bitterly of the evil effects of opium. This, he said, was in very common use, or rather abuse, as the consumption of the drug gave rise to consequences of the most disastrous kind. "Opium if taken to excess, which commonly is the case, brings on an insanity which in general terminates either

* Collector's letter No. 204, dated 3rd April 1795.

in suicide or murder. Instances of such fatal effects are so numerous and so well authenticated by the records of the Fauzdari Court, as to have attracted the particular attention of the Magistrate." * Bhang and ganja were not generally used except by natives who had come from Hindustan. It is, however, doubtful whether the opium habit was as prevalent as the Collector thought. In 1814, the total amount of 'koppah' used in the district was said to be some 60 maunds, but, as 'koppah' consists of strips of cloth soaked with poppy juice, the actual weight of the drug was only 40 maunds, which certainly was not a very large amount. 'Koppah' sold for Rs. 6 per seer in Sylhet, and Rs. 4 in the mofussil. The lack of definite knowledge on the subject is well illustrated by the fact that, three years later, the Collector said that only one-third of 'koppah' was actutually opium, and that it sold from Rs. 6 to Rs. 10 per seer. It was subsequently proposed to charge a fee of Rs. 6 per annum for each license for the retail sale of ganja, Rs. 12 for opium, and Rs. 18 for "muddad," presumably madak. Two country spirit shops were settled at a rental of Rs. 17-4 per mensem, a fee that is in marked contrast with that now paid for the Sylhet shop which, in 1904, amounted to Rs. 738 per mensem. Other shops outside the town paid from one-half to one-sixth of this very moderate demand. Even these small fees were found to be prohibitive in their effect, and in 1800, not a single license for the preparation and vend of spiritous liquors was taken out. In 1808, the Collector raised the license fee to As. 8 a day. This proposal found no favour with the Magistrate, who thought that, in view

* Collector's letter No. 216, dated 3rd June 1798.

of the large illicit trade in drugs and liquor, the fee should be within the reach of the poorest purse, and should not exceed As. 2 per diem. In 1813, the Collector estimated that one-half, or at the lowest calculation one-third of the population of Sylhet town, which, by the way, he calculated to be no less than 30,000 souls, drank spirituous liquor, and complained of the facility with which illicit distillation could be carried on. Two years later the practice was inaugurated of issuing Government opium from the Treasury. The price charged was Rs. 25 a seer, and the amount sold in the first two years was less than two seers. The price was then lowered to Rs. 20, and afterwards to Rs. 10, and a daily tax was imposed upon the vendor. This concession, coupled with a stern repression of the illicit opium traffic, sent up the issues in 1821-22 to over 24 maunds. Sylhet, however, has never been a great opium-eating district, and in 1904, only 16 maunds were issued from the Treasury.

Early Salaries.

It is sometimes thought that the salary of a Collector in the early days of British rule was small; and that, though there are now fifteen rupees to the sovereign instead of eight, as in Mr. Lindsay's day, the fall in exchange and the withdrawal of the right of trade have been fully counterbalanced by an increase in the scale of pay. This does not seem, however, to have been the case. Mr. Lindsay's salary was fixed at Rs. 1,500 per mensem in 1787, and he was further granted a house allowance of Rs. 150 per mensem.* Whether he travelled by water or by land he drew a travelling allowance of Re. 1-1 per mile, as com-

* Letter No. 70A., dated 12th April 1787, from the Assistant Secretary to the Governor-General.

pared with the four annas and eight annas of the present day, though boat and cooly hire must have been much lower a hundred years ago than they are now. Mr. Lodge's travelling allowance bill for the journey from Calcutta to Sylhet in 1794 was no less than Rs. 1,061.* Again in 1825, the Collector was allowed an aggregate salary of Rs. 2,510 per mensem, a larger sum than is drawn by any Collector at the present day.

Public offices.

But, if the salaries a hundred years ago were far from small, the expenditure on public works was very light. The cutcherry itself was a very modest building. Mr. Ahmuty, at the end of the eighteenth century, reported that he had erected "a *pucka* godown divided into three apartments wherein the public records of my office have been ever since deposited; independent of which I rent two bungalows, one of which is occupied by the mohurrirs and writers, and the other appropriated to the use of my public cutcherry." The Governor-General desired that a suitable building should be provided for the Collector's office. That officer replied that if a proper building was to be constructed it must be at least equal in size to a common dwelling-house, and contain four commodious rooms with verandahs on the north and south. The cost of such an office if made of the best materials would not be less than Rs. 10,000. The office erected for the Deputy Commissioner, after the earthquake of 1897, had a floor space of 35,000 square feet

* Collector's letter, dated 5th March 1794. The distance from Calcutta to Sylhet was said to be 998 miles, and mileage drawn accordingly. The Accounts Department at the present day hold that the distance *via* the Sundarbans is only 709 miles. It does not appear whether the same rates were allowed for journeys in the district.

including the verandahs, and though built after a plan in which economy is carried to the very verge of meanness, cost Rs. 1,68,000. The estimate sanctioned for the construction of a jail at Sylhet in 1788 amounted to Rs. 2,500, and affords a striking contrast to the Rs. 1,66,000, which have lately been expended on the existing institution. The godowns in which the myriads of cowry shells were stored were erected by the Collector at his own expense, and leased by him to Government. Mr. Lindsay says that they cost him Rs. 8,000, and he charged a rent of Rs. 100 per mensem, which for those days seems moderate enough.

A Civil Surgeon of the 18th century.

One of the most serious disabilities under which the people of Sylhet labour at the present day is the want of proper treatment when they succumb to the unsanitary conditions in which their lives are passed, but the Medical Department has fortunately made some advance since the days of Mughal rule. In 1789, Mr. Willes complained that one Mohammad Jaffar was acting as medical adviser to the Nawab at Dacca, in spite of the fact that he held a grant of land worth Rs. 900 per annum, which had been given to his predecessors by the Mughal Government in consideration of their undertaking the duties now assigned to the civil surgeon of Sylhet. Mr. Willes requested that this gentleman might be sent back to the district to which he properly belonged, as the people were in great distress from want of either a Muhammadan or Bengali doctor. The unfortunate civil surgeon was expected to devote fully half of his annual grant to the purchase of medicines; but it is to be presumed that he was allowed to add by private

practice to the modest stipend he received from Government.

Sylhet in 1837.

In the *Friend of India* of February 9th, 1837, the following gloomy account is given of the condition of the district. The writer seems to infer misery and deterioration from the fact that the revenue is not easily collected; but the difficulty experienced in realizing the very small Government demand, a difficulty which is experienced now as then, is due to other causes :—

"In the sitting of the Board of Revenue on the 30th of January last, the present state of the district of Sylhet was brought under consideration. That district during the last forty years has been subject to a gradual deterioration ; and has at length, reached that point of wretchedness which naturally produces a reaction. Forty years ago, it was, comparatively speaking, in a flourishing state ; now it is a complete pauper warren. In the whole district there are not fifteen landed proprietors possessed of Rs. 5,000 and the condition of the great bulk of zamindars is in the last degree wretched. But it is of late years that the deterioration has taken the most rapid strides. In 1821, the district was in so prosperous a state, that a sale of land for arrears of revenue hardly ever took place. Even as late 1829, there were but sixty-three estates sold by the Collector ; in 1834, the number of estates sold rose to about 250 ; the next year, the number was doubled ; and in the past year, it had reached the extent of 1,004. At the close of the last accounts, it was found, that though the assessment of the entire district did not much exceed three lakhs of rupees, two lakhs of this sum remained unpaid, and that it became necessary to advertise 26,250 tenures for sale. But what is to restore comfort and security to the vast population whose sole dependance is on the food raised in a district, in which every estate, with the exception of a small fraction, is put up to sale ? To complete the misery of the district, these sales, it appears, are attended by a set of speculators, who bid for the forfeited estates, though not themselves possessing more than the amount of the deposit money ; and whose hope of gain in this lottery of desolation, is built on their being able to sell their purchase to advantage, before the settling day arrives."

1857. Sylhet did not escape unscathed from the troubles of 1857. In December a party of the Chittagong mutineers entered the south of the district, with the evident intention of pushing on through the Surma Valley to Manipur. A detachment of the Sylhet Light Infantry, under their Commanding Officer, the Hon'ble Major Byng, started to Pratapgarh to intercept them, but on arriving there learnt that they had changed the direction of their march, and were then in the neighbourhood of Latu. The troops immediately started for that place, and on reaching it had barely time to form, when the mutineers came into sight, advancing in good order. A smart action took place, and the enemy, though undoubtedly superior in numbers, broke and fled, leaving 26 dead upon the field. Our own loss was small, and consisted of five dead and one severely wounded, but Major Byng was unfortunately amongst the killed. It was impossible to follow up the mutineers with any hope of success through the jungle covered hills into which they had fled. Detachments of men were, however, posted so as to intercept their march towards Manipur, and a native officer, who had been sent with sixteen men to attack ten of the enemy who were lurking in the jungle near Latu, succeeded in killing eight of them. On the 23rd of December the mutineers entered Cachar ; but the pursuit was still maintained, and they were engaged and defeated on December 23rd, January 12th, January 22nd and January 26th. They were now completely disorganized and dispirited. They were destitute of all supplies, and some were found lying in the jungle, having died of actual starvation, while others were despatched by Kuki scouts, who had been offered a reward for every sepoy killed. It

is believed that out of the three companies which left Chittagong not three or four men escaped death or capture.

Archæological remains.

The district is not rich in archæological remains of interest. Mosques are numerous, especially in North Sylhet, but most of them are still used as places of worship, and are described in the following chapter. Two miles north-east of the Patharkandi police station there are the remains of the Fort of Raja Pratap Sing, a petty local notable who has given his name to the Pratapgarh pargana. Reference has been already made to the ruins in South Sylhet associated with the names of Subid Narayan and Khowaj Osman, and in pargana Bhanugach in the same locality there is a fort attributed to Chandra Singh. This man belonged to the family of the Tippera Rajas and is said to have moved from the hills into the Sylhet plains about the seventh century, A. D.

CHAPTER III.

THE PEOPLE.

Density—Towns and villages—Growth of population—Migration—Sex and marriage—Infirmities—Language—Caste—Brahmans—Sudras—Caste distribution—Muhammadanism—Mosques and tombs—Hinduism—The Shahaj Bhajan—Sacred places—Akhras—Christianity—Occupations—Leading families—Marriage customs—Hindu festivals—Amusements.

Density of Population.

Sylhet covers an area of 5,435 square miles, and, though there are parts of it which would not generally be considered desirable places of habitation, it supports a much larger population than any other district in Assam. In 1901, the density was 412 to the square mile. This was greatly in excess of the figure for the Province as a whole (109), though considerably below that of the two Bengal districts which adjoin Sylhet on the west: Mymensingh, where there was a density of 618 persons to the square mile, and Tippera, where the density was as high as 848.. The statement in the margin shows the density by subdivisions. In the northern part of Sylhet, the floods of rain that are precipitated on the southern face of the Assam range, and the heavy local fall convert the plain into a swamp at certain seasons of the year. In the centre of the great depressions, or basins, with which

	No. of persons per square mile.
Sunamganj ..	291
North Sylhet ..	439
Karimganj ..	392
South Sylhet ..	451
Habiganj ..	556

this locality abounds, the cultivation of hot weather crops is quite impossible, and there is no high land available for village sites. The Dharmapasha thana has a density of only 246, over a total area of 321 square miles, while in the Sunamganj thana, which adjoins it on the east, there are only 262 persons to the square mile. In the Jaintia Parganas which, roughly speaking, are enclosed within the Surma river, the Piyaingong, and the Jaintia Hills, the density (250) is slightly less. Towards the centre of the district population increases, and in the Balaganj thana, over a total area of 222 square miles, there is an average density of 640 people to the square mile. The whole of the Habiganj subdivision is very fully peopled, the density ranging from 493 in the Baniyachung thana to 651 in the Madhabpur thana in the south-west corner of the district. Population is also fairly dense in South Sylhet, as the low ranges of hills, which are unfit for the growth of ordinary crops, have been to a great extent cleared and planted out with tea. In Karimganj population begins to fall off, as a large proportion of the surface is covered with the Chhatachura, Pratapgarh, and Pathariya hills; and the upper valleys of the Langai and Singla have not yet been opened out for cultivation. Taking the thana as a unit, it cannot be said that any portion of the district is sparsely peopled, as nowhere is the density less than 246 to the square mile. Population is, however, comparatively sparse in the belt of land lying at the foot of the hills along the northern frontier, is somewhat denser on the eastern frontier, and is positively congested in the central and south-western portions of the district. The density in each thana in 1901 will be found in Table II.

Sylhet contains five small towns and 8,330 villages.

Towns and villages.

Town.		Population 1901.
Sylhet	..	13,893
Karimganj	..	5,692
Habiganj	..	5,236
Sunamganj	..	3,530
Maulavi Bazar	..	2,481

The population of these towns at the census of 1901 is shewn in the statement in the margin. Seven-eighths of the villages are reported to be small hamlets with less than 500 inhabitants, and there were only 54 with a population ranging from two to five thousand souls. Little reliance can, however, be placed upon these figures. The villages are not, as in some Provinces of India, clusters of huts which stand out clearly in the centre of the fields tilled by their inhabitants. Rice, the staple crop, is grown in wide plains, dotted over with clumps of bamboos and fruit trees, in which are buried the houses of the cultivators. Except in the flooded tracts, it is groves and not villages that the traveller sees when riding through the more densely populated portions of the district, and not a house can usually be discerned till he has penetrated this jungle of plantains, betelnut trees, and bamboos. It is thus difficult to tell where one village ends and another begins, or to which of the larger clumps of trees should be assigned the smaller clumps which are freely dotted about amongst the rice fields, and the village as a statistical unit is of little value.

Growth of population.

The earliest estimate of the population is one made by Mr. John Willes in 1789. He reported that there were altogether 492,945 people in the district; but his figures were evidently very much below the mark, and in 1813 the Collector made a much more reasonable estimate of 1,500,000 persons. In 1853, Mr. Mills calculated that the

population was about 1,393,500, this figure being apparently obtained by multiplying by five the number of houses reported by the police. This estimate was much more plausible than one framed by the Survey Department in 1860, which only amounted to 795,272 souls. In 1866, the Collector stated that, including the Jaintia Parganas, the whole population of the district might be fairly estimated at 1,000,000, or half a million less than the guess made by his predecessor 50 years before. The census taken a few years later in 1872 showed that his estimate was ridiculously low.

	Population.	Percentage variation.
1872 ..	1,719,539	
1881 ..	1,969,009	+ 14·5
1891 ..	2,154,593	+ 9·4
1901 ..	2,241,848	+ 4·0

The statement in the margin shows the population recorded at each of the four last enumerations, with the percentage of increase occurring in each decade. Part of the increase disclosed in 1881 was, no doubt, due to the inaccuracy of the enumeration of 1872. In the next decade there was a fair expansion of the population, but much of this was due to immigration; and the natural growth, *i.e.*, the increase in the number of persons born and censused in the district, only amounted to 5·8 per cent. in the ten years. In South Sylhet, where there was a great development of the tea industry, the gross increase amounted to as much as 16 per cent., and in Karimganj, where similar causes were in operation, there was an increase of 12 per cent. In Habiganj, on the other hand, the increase was less than 6 per cent. During the next decennial period the gross increase amounted to 4 per cent. This in itself is small enough, but more than half of this was due to immigration, and the number of persons born and censused in the district

only increased by 1·9 per cent. The local variation in the population is thus described in the Report on the census of Assam in 1901.* "From the statement in the margin it appears that, while in one subdivision there has been an increase of nearly 10 per cent., in another there has been a decrease of nearly 4.

Distribution of population by Subdivisions.

SUBDIVISION.	Population 1901.	PERCENTAGE VARIATION.	
		1891—1901.	1881—1891.
Sunamganj ..	433,752	+ 4·9	+ 8·0
North Sylhet ..	463,477	— 3·9	+ 7·9
Karimganj ..	410,460	+ 6·7	+12·0
South Sylhet ..	379,158	+ 2·5	+16·2
Habiganj ..	555,001	+ 9·9	+ 5·5

Habiganj has increased by 9·9 per cent., and, though there has been a substantial increase in the number of persons censused on tea gardens, the general population has increased by 7·3 per cent. In Sunamganj also there has been a very fair natural growth of the population, the increase amounting to nearly 5 per cent.; and as this cannot be considered a particularly healthy portion of the district, lying, as it does, at the foot of the Khasi Hills, there is no need to be dissatisfied with the progress made during the decade. The same cannot, however, be said of Karimganj, for, though the increase in the total population amounts to 6·7 per cent., the greater part of this is due to the tea industry, persons censused outside tea gardens having only increased by 2·5 per cent. In South Sylhet, the state of affairs is still more unsatisfactory, as the population outside tea gardens has actually decreased by 3·9 per cent. during the last ten years, owing to the ravages of malerial fever; while in North Sylhet the total population is less by 3·9 per cent. than it was ten years ago." The decrease in the sadr subdivision was ascribed to a wave of malarial fever, which

* Page 15.

was unusually virulent in 1897 and 1898, and there can be little doubt that, in the middle of the nineties, Sylhet, like most of the other districts in Assam, was suffering from abnormally unfavourable conditions.

Migration.

Sylhet is one of the most important tea districts in the Province, and during the ten years ending with 1900 over 141,000 coolies were imported to its gardens. But the indigenous population is so large that, at the last census, foreigners, *i.e.*, persons born outside the Province, formed only a little more than 7 per cent. of the total population. This proportion is unusually low for Assam. In the Province as a whole, foreigners formed nearly 13 per cent. of the persons censused there in 1901; and in the four other districts in which the tea industry is of considerable importance, *i.e.*, Cachar, Darrang, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur, the rates varied from 24 to 41 per cent. The distribution varies considerably by subdivisions. In South Sylhet foreigners formed 16 per cent., and in Karimganj 10 per cent. of the total population; whereas in Sunamganj they were only 4 and in North Sylhet 3 per cent. of the persons censused within the subdivisional boundaries.

The total number of foreign immigrants was 164,895, but a considerable proportion of these persons were not members of the cooly castes. The statement in the margin shows that over 32,000 persons had entered Sylhet from Hill Tippera and the three neighbouring districts of Bengal. No less than 30,000 of these people were

Immigrants from Mymensingh ..	15,289
Hill Tippera and Tippera district	11,690
Dacca	5,428
Total ..	32,407

found in the frontier subdivisions of Sunamganj and Habiganj, so that it is not unreasonable to suppose that most of them had only moved across the border—a few miles from their former homes, and thus belonged to a quite different category from that in which the garden cooly must be placed. Sylhet, however, gains nothing by this movement of the population, as the number of persons who were born in Assam, in this case practically Sylhet, and were censused in the four adjoining districts of Bengal, was over 36,000. Nearly half of these people were found in the neighbouring state of Hill Tippera.

Emigrants from Assam to	
Hill Tippera	16,106
Tippera	8,057
Mymensingh	9,890
Dacca	2,340
Total ..	36,393

There is plenty of waste land still available here, which the authorities are willing to lease out on easy terms, and which forms a great attraction to the inhabitants of the densely populated subdivision of Habiganj. There is a good deal of inter-marriage between Sylhet and Tippera and Mymensingh, and, as there are no natural frontiers, it is only to be expected that there should be a certain amount of movement across the boundary of the Province. The majority of these people go to Bengal as servants, cooks, priests, and shopkeepers, as the pressure on the soil is as severe there as in their native district.

Turning to the Provinces and divisions from which the coolies come, it appears that the proportion of immigrants from Chota Nagpur (24,627) is comparatively low. This is due to the fact that natives of the United Provinces thrive better in the Surma Valley than in Assam Proper, and are employed by planters in place of the true jungly cooly who is difficult and expensive

to procure. Three-fourths of these Chota Nagpuris were found in the two subdivisions of South Sylhet and Habiganj. 51,068 natives of the United Provinces were censused in the district, most of whom come from Ghazipur and Azamgarh. Nearly one half of these coolies were living in the Karimganj subdivision, and most of the remainder in South Sylhet. 13,144 persons came from the Central Provinces, chiefly from the districts of Bilaspur and Jabalpur; and over 10,000 from Madras. Unlike the Assam Valley, the number of settlers from Nepal is very small.

Sylhet, as is only natural, loses largely by inter-district migration. Most of this takes place with the neighbouring district of the Cachar Plains, to which Sylhet sent 25,971 persons in 1901, though it received only 4,111 in return. This does not, of course, represent the loss to Sylhet in the single decade 1891—1901. Cachar itself is now fairly densely peopled, and most of these Sylhettis moved into it some years ago. The actual increase at the last census over the figures for 1891 was only 2,259; but, to provide for this increase, and to make good deficiencies caused by death, must have required the emigration of about 8,500 persons from Sylhet to Cachar between 1891 and 1901. It need hardly be said that the district can easily afford to spare these men. In places there is considerable pressure on the soil, and it is hoped that now that the railway has been completed through the North Cachar Hills, some of its teeming thousands may pass across into the fertile plains of the Assam Valley. Details with regard to the proportion of immigrants in each subdivision will be found in Table IV.

Sex and marriage.

The proportion of women in 1901 was fairly high, (964 to 1,000 men) and considerably exceeded the proportion for the Province as a whole. This was, however, largely due to the emigration of men in considerable numbers to Cachar, and to the fact that the proportion of the sexes was not, as in the other tea districts, seriously affected by immigration. If these two factors are eliminated, and the proportion calculated on the natural population, *i.e.*, those born in the district and censused in the Province, it will be found that there were, in 1901, only 958 women to every thousand men, a figure which was 4 below the average for the plains districts as a whole. The ratio between the sexes has shown little tendency to change, and, taking those born and censused in the district, the proportion of women was practically identical at the three last enumerations. Few things are more obscure than the causes which determine the proportion of the sexes, but one factor which is known to operate adversely on female life, *i.e.*, infant marriage, is unfortunately in existence in Sylhet.

The statement in the margin shows the percentage of Hindu girls under ten, and between ten and fifteen, who have performed the marriage ceremony ; and the proportion of Hindu girls between fifteen and twenty who are still unwed. Similar figures are given for Muhammadans, and for the Hindus of Nowgong, who are fortunately free from the ideas that in Bengal "have

	Percentage married and widowed amongst girls aged.		Percentage unmarried amongst girls aged.
	0-10	10-15	15-20
Nowgong Hindus	0·2	10·5	40·1
Sylhet Hindus	3·4	57·7	5·2
Sylhet Muhammadans.	1·0	37·6	7·2

succeeded, without a shadow of textual authority, in bringing about the monstrous abuse that the girls of the upper classes commence married life at the age of nine years, and become mothers at the very earliest time that it is possible for them to do so."* The contrast between the figures is very striking. In an equal number of little Hindu girls under ten, there are 17 who have performed the marriage ceremony in Sylhet, for every one who has been hurried into matrimony in Nowgong, and the contrast at the next age period is almost equally pronounced. Over 15 the number of unmarried maidens in Sylhet is very small, and many of them, probably, suffer from some physical disqualification which seriously affects their chances in the marriage market. The effect of contact is also clearly shown. The Muhammadans have, to a great extent, adopted the fashions of their Hindu neighbours, in spite of the obvious disadvantages of union with a little girl, instead of with a full grown young woman ; disadvantages which are not minimised in their case by any foolish dictates of tradition.

The future of the district can to some extent be judged by the proportion borne by the reproductive element, which in this case may be fairly taken as married women between the ages of 15 and 40, to the total population. Out of every thousand persons censused in Sylhet in 1901, 161 were potential mothers, a proportion which was slightly higher than that prevailing in the Province as a whole (157). As compared with the Central Provinces and Bengal the district is, however, handicapped in the race for population, as in the former

* Report on the Census of India in 1901, p. 433.

Province there were 169, in the latter 165 potential mothers per mille in 1901.

Infirmities.

		Sylhet.	Assam.	India.
Insane	..	4	5	8
Deaf mute	..	8	9	6
Blind	..	11	10	12
Lepers	..	15	13	5

The abstract in the margin shows, out of 10,000 males, the number afflicted with the four special infirmities selected for record at the census of 1901. The figures for males only have been given, as concealment is more likely to occur in the case of women, and in their case the figures for leprosy seem undoubtedly to be incorrect. The number of persons afflicted with this terrible disease is unusually large, and an asylum has been opened at Sylhet for the reception of pauper lepers. The total number of males suffering from this disease in 1901 was 1,728. The number of leprous women was in all probability, not much smaller, though the number actually returned was only 422. Deaf-mutism and blindness are also fairly prevalent.

Language.

Bengali is the ordinary language of the district and was returned by 92 per cent. of the inhabitants, Hindi by nearly 5 per cent., and Manipuri by 1¼ per cent. Tipura is spoken on the southern frontier, and the various cooly languages have their own adherents. In Table III details are given for the principal languages by subdivisions. According to Dr. Grierson, the language spoken by the inhabitants of Eastern Sylhet is not intelligible to the natives of Central or Northern Bengal.* There are several peculiarities of pronunciation. K has a guttural

* Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. V., Pt. I, p. 224.

sound like the German ch., ch. is pronounced like s, and there is no difference between ch. and chh. The sibilant, as in the case of Assamese, is often replaced by h, and the Sylhetti speaks of *haph* when referring to a snake, and talks of *hakal* instead of *sakal*. But, like a veritable cockney, he is not content with inserting h's where they are not wanted, but frequently omits them when they are. The elephant masquerades as *ati*, and *hatgao*, which really should be *satgao*, is loosely spoken of as *atgao*. The h is also reduced almost to the vanishing point in *ghar*, *bhari*, or in verbs like *kahilam*. The Devanagari character is used amongst low caste Muhammadans, especially in the east of the district. They find it easier to master than Bengali, and Bengali books are printed in this character for their benefit.

Caste.

The caste system of Sylhet is based on the principles in force in Eastern Bengal, a tract of country of which it really forms a part; but as is only natural in a frontier district, social restrictions are to some extent relaxed. Baidyas and Kayasthas intermarry, and Kayastha girls are not unfrequently given to men of lower rank. In these cases, the bride, of course, sinks to the status of her husband, but her parents do not lose their caste on account of the misalliance. The Shahas, who are the great trading caste of Sylhet, and have amassed considerable wealth, occupy a good position in society, though Brahmans will not actually take water from their hands; but even this privilege is accorded to the Das who are the great cultivating caste of the district. This concession is not extended to the Das's priest; and though a Kayastha or Baidya will

take water brought him by a Das, and a high caste Brahman will allow him to enter his cook house, the Das's priest could not offer a cup of water even to a member of the Nabasakh without receiving a severe rebuff. Sylhet and Cachar are, by the way, the only districts in Assam in which the Nabasakh are found, *i.e.*, the functional castes, by tradition nine in number, from whose hands a Brahman can take water. In Sylhet they include the Baniya, Barui, Gandhabanik, Goala, Kamar, Kumhar, Mayara, Napit, Tanti, and Teli. The typical castes of the district hardly call for special mention. They do not differ from those of Eastern Bengal, and are described at length in Mr. Risley's work on the Tribes and Castes of Bengal. Brief notes on all the castes censused in Assam will also be found in the Report on the census of that Province in 1901.

Brahmans.

Some reference should, however, be made to the Brahmans on account of their high rank, and to the Sudras who occupy a somewhat peculiar position in Sylhet. The five Brahmans who were imported by the Raja of Tippera in 642 A. D. are said to have been the first members of that caste who settled in the district. The original immigrants were Vaidiks, but representatives of the Rarhi and Barendra septs are also found. They have, however, been so thoroughly fused by intermarriage, that, in practice, there is hardly any difference between these three divisions. Two valid distinctions exist between the Sampradayiks and the non-Sampradayiks, and between the Gaur Gobindi and other Brahmans. The origin of these Gaur Gobindi Brahmans is obscure, and they

endeavour to merge their identity in that of the whole Brahman caste. Gaur Gobind, the last Hindu king of Sylhet, is said to have raised the position of the Maharas and Dases, and general opinion would suggest that the Brahmans who bear his name are indebted to his kind offices for their high position. The most respectable classes of Brahmans are known as Sampradayiks, and do not often marry outside their own community. They are again sub-divided into four local sections: the eastern, who are the most honourable of all and live in the east of the South Sylhet subdivision, the central, southern, and northern. The customs of the Sylhetti Brahmans do not materially differ from those followed in Bengal, which are described at length in Mr. Risley's Tribes and Castes of Bengal. They observe the rules of the *gotra*,* and the usual restrictions which encompass a member of the priestly caste from the day of his birth to the day when he is laid upon the funeral pyre. Brahmans are distributed fairly evenly all over the district but are not very numerous in Sunamganj.

Sudras.

The term Sudra is usually applied to the lowest of the four great divisions of Manu, of which the other three are the Brahmans, Kshattriyas, and Vaisyas, but in Sylhet it has acquired a special meaning. Here it is used of the "Deba Das," the low caste people who are knows as "·inghas" and "Bhandaris," and act as servants to Brahmans, Kayasthas, and Baidyas. They

* The following are the principal *gotras* in Sylhet: Sandilya, Bharadhwaja, Kasyapa, Savarna, Ghritakausika, Moudgalya, Parasara, Batsya, Basistha, Jamadagnya, Gautama, Agnibeshma, Krishnatreya, Kusika, Kousika, Katyayana, Saktri, Gargya, Atreya, Gargya Maharshi, Swarna-kousika, Jatukarna and Batsa.

are often allowed to occupy their land rent free, and in return for this are bound to render their masters any assistance that may be necessary. Separate figures have not been given for the Sudras in Table IV. as the Halwa Das dislike the prefix Halwa, and, in 1901, many of them described themselves as Sudra Das or even Sudra. Another curious caste are the Rarh or Kusiari. Their second name is said to be derived either from the Kusiyara river, or from the sugarcane *kushiyar* which they grow. But neither of these derivations seem appropriate, as they would apply with equal force to thousands of other people. Another tradition says that they are of Tippera or Bodo descent. Kusiaris are cultivators by profession, they are looked down on by the Halwa Das, and numerically they are unimportant. The Haijongs, who are found in the Sunamganj subdivision, seem to have originally come from the Garo Hills. They speak a peculiar dialect of their own, and are, apparently, the result of a union between Garos and low caste people of the plains.

Caste distribution.

The number of persons returned under each of the main castes in 1901 will be found in Table IV, and it only remains to touch briefly on their local distribution. Kayasthas are specially numerous in Habiganj and North Sylhet, and are comparatively scarce in Karimganj. The Das are found in strong force all over the district, but are particularly numerous in Sunamganj, where they form nearly one-third of the total Hindu population ; a proportion about twice as large as that existing in any other subdivision. The Baruis are specially numerous in South Sylhet, where their

pan gardens are to be seen on the banks of the rivers. Habiganj and Sunamganj are the strongholds of the Shahas and Kaibarttas. The latter are hardly found in the three remaining subdivisions, their place being taken by Dom Patnis who are especially numerous in Karimganj. Most of tht Manipuris are settled in Karimganj and South Sylhet, though in the latter subdivision they masquerade under the name of Khatris or Kshattriyas. The language test is, under these circumstances, the most reliable, and this shows that in 1901, nearly 29,000 persons were speakers of Manipuri. It is, however, a mistake to suppose that at the present day there is any appreciable immigration from Manipur. This movement westward took place some years ago. Each succeeding census shows a large decrease in the number of persons born in Manipur and censused in Sylhet, and in 1901 there were only 89.* These Manipuris are a factor with whom the district officer has to reckon. The history of their own State is one of perpetual conflict ; wars and rumours of wars, risings and rebellions, usurpers seizing the throne and being in their turns assailed by other usurpers. The Manipuris are by nature a turbulent and unruly people, and have little respect for the majesty of the law. In 1857, it was thought that possibly they might give trouble, and recently at Bhanubil they have evinced a tendency to defy not only their own landlord but the representatives of Government itself. They are also suspected of having an inclination for dacoity and other violent forms of crime.

* The corresponding figures for 1881 were 3,253 and for 1891, 336.

The abstract in the margin gives some idea of the ethnical composition of the the people. The Muhammadans describe themselves as Sheikhs, but the great majority are no doubt descended from the aboriginal inhabitants of the Surma Valley, and must have been largely recruited from the humble Hindu castes, who themselves were very probably of Bodo origin. Both the Nabasakh and the lower functional castes have to a great extent abandoned their traditional occupations for agriculture. The fishing castes are very strongly represented, but this is only natural in so watery a district. The bulk of the undistributed nine per cent. are foreigners of various humble castes employed on tea gardens.

Ethnical composition of the peoples.

	Percentage on total district population.
Muhammadans	53
Higher Hindu Castes (Brahmans, Bhats, Baidyas and Kayasthas)	5
The Nabasakh	5
Respectable Cultivating Castes (Sudra, Sudra Das, Halwa Das, Das)	7
Lower functional Castes (Shaha, Sunri, Jugi, Dholis, Sutradhar) ...	6
Fishing Castes (Kaibartta, Dom Patni, Namasudra, Bhuinmalis, Mali)	13
Manipuris	1
Animistic Tribes (Tipperas Garos, Khasis, Haijongs)	1
Other Persons	9
Total	100

Classified by religion, the population of Sylhet in 1901 was distributed in the following proportions: Muhammadans 52·7 per cent., Hindus 46·8 per cent., Animists 0·5 per cent. The abstract in the margin shows the percentage of the population in each subdivision who profess the faith of Islam. As is only natural, Muhammadans are most numerous in North Sylhet, which was the first portion of the district to come into their possession, and on the western frontier which adjoins Bengal. South Sylhet and Karimganj came less under the influence of the Moslem faith, and for

Religion—Muhammadanism.

	Percentage of Muhammadans to total population.
North Sylhet ..	67
Sunamganj ..	55
Habiganj ..	53
Karimganj ..	47
South Sylhet ..	39

many years were probably dominated to some extent by the Hindu Kingdom of Tippera.

During the last decade the increase amongst the Muhammadans amounted to 5 per cent, though the natural growth of the population was less than 2 per cent. This is the more remarkable in that nowhere are the Muhammadans more numerous than in North Sylhet, a subdivision in which the last census disclosed a serious decrease in the population. Four Musalman gentlemen, who were consulted by the Deputy Commissioner, were all of opinion that conversion had very little to do with the growth of the Muhammadan population. There is no organised propaganda of the faith, and the few converts made are said to be Hindus of low-caste, who have been detected in intrigues with Muhammadans of the opposite sex. The higher rate of increase amongst the Musalmans is ascribed to superior fecundity, which is said to be due to greater physical vigour and a more nourishing dietary, to the absence of restrictions on widow remarriage, to a less marked disparity between the ages of husband and wife, and, to some extent, to the greater prevalence of polygamy. The absence of restrictions on widow remarriage is probably the most important factor. In 1901, there were only 31,000 Muhammadan widows between 15 and 40, as compared with 60,000 Hindu widows of this age, and the Musalmans had about 30,000 more potential mothers, *i. e.*, married women between 15 and 40, than the followers of the rival religion. A difference such as this is bound to produce a sensible effect on the growth of the population.

Mosques and tombs.

The town of Sylhet is full of memorials of its Muhammadan conquerors. On every side are to be seen mosques, the majority of which are still in excellent repair, and are attended by a concourse of devout worshippers. But, even more numerous than the mosques, are the large brick tombs of the Muhammadan saints, each with a little masonry receptacle for a native lamp, or else with a bamboo lamp post of the most modern pattern, standing at its side. These tombs are to be seen in every quarter of the town. There is hardly a road which has not one or more along it, hardly a hill which has not the bones of saints upon its summit. The religious centre of Sylhet is the shrine of the famous Shah Jalal. It is situated about a mile north of the cutcherry, some three or four hundred yards west of the road that leads to Companyganj. At the point where the main and branch roads meet are the masonry walls of an old mosque, begun some two and a half centuries ago, but still unfinished. The builder was dilatory, the work was not completed within the stated time, and, as a punishment for his neglect, the Nawab of that day had him summarily put to death. The building is now almost completely hidden by the trees that have succeeded in effecting a lodgment in its walls, but, though the roof was never finished, the massive outer walls suffered little or no damage in the great earthquake of 1897.

Shah Jalal's mosque, which was built in 1531 A. D., is approached through a gateway of solid masonry, much of which was shaken down in 1897, and now lies in huge blocks in picturesque confusion on the ground. On the

left hand side as you enter is a tank with a ruined mosque in front. On the right is an open shed, in which food is cooked for the worshippers on holy days, one huge cauldron alone containing as much as six and a half hundredweight of rice. The building is approached by a flight of steps which terminates in a broad platform. In front is a central hall through which the worshipper passes to the actual tomb. Here there is a small place of prayer, which, together with the gateway, is said to have been erected by Mr. John Willes, one of the earliest of the Collectors of Sylhet. South of the central hall is the mosque in which prayers are usually held, while at the back is a deep well full of fish who come when called to be fed. A grant of Rs. 93 per mensem, which was sanctioned by the Nawabs for the maintenance of this institution, has been confirmed by the British Government. Another famous mosque is situated near the south-west corner of the Jail compound, and was founded by Shah Abu Turab in 1698 A. D.

Masonry mosques are common even in the villages of North Sylhet, but, where the villagers cannot afford this luxury, service is often held in a small thatched hut. Near the Shahji Bazar railway station, in the south-west corner of the district, is the *darga* of Shah Fateh Ghazi, one of the companions of Shah Jalal. This *darga* is maintained from the rents received from a village which was granted to it by the Mughal Government, and has since been exempted from payment of land revenue, and a *mela* has for many years been held in the vicinity about the middle of January. In this same thana of Madhabpur there are the *dargas* of other famous Muhammadan saints,

i.e., of Shah Ahmed Ghazi at Fathepur, of Shah Ghyas Saheb at Charabhanga in pargana Ghyasnagar, of Shah Aulia in pargana Kasimnagar, of Shah Ali and Shah Ghazi near Kasimpur, and of the Panch Pirs at Alabakshpur. In Dhargam pargana, in Jaintia, there is the tomb of a great fakir called Patashah, at which offerings are made by those who are anxious to be cured of some disease or to be blessed with children. In the Pratapgarh pargana, to the south of Karimganj, there are several *mukams* which are said to have been founded by one of the Badshas of Delhi, who turned fakir and settled in that lonely spot. Timber traders, whether Muhammadan or Hindu, still worship at these places, and it is said that tigers in former days used to visit these shrines on Thursday nights, and eat any food left for them, without molesting the persons stopping in the *mukam*. Thursdays are still observed as holy days by the lumber men in these hills, and timber is neither felled nor dragged on that day of the week. Nearly all the Muhammadans of Sylhet are Sunnis, but there is one important family, that of Moulavi Ali Amjad Khan, which professes the Shiah creed.

Hinduism.

Hinduism is divided into three main sects, Saktism, Sivaitism, and Vaishnavism. At the census of 1901 nearly 30 per cent. of the Hindus returned themselves as Saktists, 5½ per cent. as worshippers of Siva, 53½ per cent. as Vaishnavites, and 11 per cent. failed to specify the particular form of that religion to which they owed allegiance. Saktists worship the reproductive powers of nature as manifested in the female, and Sivaites the male emblem of fertility. The

latter adore Siva, the former his wife Sakti. The Vaishnavites represent a revolt against the haughty pretensions of the Brahmans and the degrading rites of the Tantric worship. Little attention is paid to caste restrictions, the use of animal food and wine is deprecated, and the slaughter of animals in sacrifice forbidden. Krishna is the particular manifestation of the deity selected for special reverence, and *sankirtan*, or music and songs, is declared to be the most suitable form of worship. The family home of Chaitanya, the great Vaishnavite reformer, who was born in 1484 A.D., was situated at Dhakadakshin, about ten miles south-east of Sylhet town, and most of his followers regard him as the latest incarnation of Vishnu.

The Shahaj Bhojan.

A somewhat curious sect is that which is known as the Shahaj or Kishori Bhojan. It was founded by one Kalachand Vidyalanker of the Bikrampur pargana in Dacca, and salvation is said to be obtained by imitating the amorous actions of Krishna at Brindaban. Each devotee has one or more female associates with whom, according to most accounts, he indulges, or endeavours to indulge, in very curious practices. The members of this sect are said to assemble secretly at night and to worship the mistress of their priest, who is supposed to represent Radha, the wife of Krishna. Food is offered to her, and, after she has taken a little, the *prasada*, or leavings, are distributed amongst the congregation. Songs are sung, ganja is consumed, and a good deal of sexual intercourse is supposed to take place. The female worshippers are

generally young widows, and most of the members of this sect are persons of low caste.

Sacred places in Sylhet.

There are few masonry temples in Sylhet, and religious buildings usually take the form of *akhras* for the Vaishnavites, and Kali or Durga *baris* for the worshippers of Sakti. An *akhra* is a religious institution inhabited by Vaishnavite devotees, who are supported by the contributions of their immediate disciples or of devout Hindus in general. There is little of dignity either in the demeanour of the inmates or in the appearance of the buildings in which they dwell. In many of these institutions there are women as well as men, and it would hardly be too much to say that under the specious cloak of religion a large proportion of the devotees live a life of sloth and sensual indulgence. The *akhras* of Sylhet and Bithangal are described below, but these are two of the finest specimens of their kind, and the ordinary *akhra* is a place of much less interest and importance. In the Kali or Durga *bari* too, no less than in the *akhra*, Hinduism suffers, as it so often does, from the mean and unworthy form in which it is presented to the world. The emotions roused by a contemplation of the image of the goddess are hardly those of reverence or awe, and the building in which it is housed is generally a sorry shanty whose roof of hideous corrugated iron is supported on wooden posts. The unprejudiced observer in Sylhet can hardly fail to be impressed by the extraordinary difference between the outward manifestations of the Muhammadan and Hindu faith. In the one case there is simplicity, severity, cleanliness, and dignity. In the

other there is only too often nothing but grotesqueness, meanness, and squalor, and it is difficult to realize that its adherents include the most advanced and intelligent sections of the population.

Saktist Piths.

The places which are most sacred in Saktist eyes are Phaljor in pargana Bhaurbhag in Jaintia, where there is a stone pillar which is said to be Sati's left leg, and Jainpur, about a mile and half south of Sylhet town, where her neck is said to have fallen when her body was dismembered by Vishnu. The latter *pith*, as the places consecrated by the fragments of Sati's severed body are called, has only recently been rediscovered. Sati's neck is represented by a piece of flat rock, similar to that found on most of the tilas round Sylhet. Her *bhairabi*, or guardian left to protect her by Siva, takes the usual form of a small upright pillar of rock shaped like a phallus. There is no temple over these remains, and hardly anything to distinguish them from many similar pieces of stone found in the neighbourhood of Sylhet town. At Barakia and at Chandipur, a village near Dwara Bazar in the Chhatak thana, there are shrines of Chandi, another incarnation of Sakti, which are visited by pilgrims on the Ram Navami day.

Sivaite Shrines.

The following places are considered by the Sivaites to be particularly sacred: (1) Nirmai in the South Sylhet subdivision, where there is an image of Siva, before which people sometimes shave their hair in the hope of being delivered from disease. (2) Siddheswar's temple

at Badarpur, a few yards beyond the boundary of the district. (3) Rupnath in the Jaintia Hills about a mile and a half beyond the district boundary, and (4) Sarbananda about a mile and a half south of Sylhet town. The last two places are said to be the *bhairabis* of the neighbouring *piths*. Fairs are held at each of these shrines on the occasion of the Sivaratri festival. Large *lingams*, or stone pillars intended to represent the phallus, are situated three miles south of Jaintiapur; at Hatakeswar on the left bank of the Surma in the Karimganj subdivision where it is said to have been worshipped by Gaur Gobind, the last Raja of Sylhet; and at Tungeswar in the Habiganj subdivision.

Vaishnavite akhras.

The places which are held by the Vaishnavites in most respect are the temple of Chaitanya at Dhakadakshin or Thakurbari, and the temple at Supatala in Panchakhanda. At the latter place there is a stone image of Vishnu, which has a considerable local reputation. There is another image of Vishnu in the Jagannathpur village, in the south-east corner of the Sunamganj subdivision. It is said to have been made by Viswakarma, the god of artificers himself, in the time of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, and on this account is visited by pilgrims from every part of the district. At Bithangal near the Mymensingh boundary there is an *akhra* under the management of the Jaganmohani sect. At one time there was neither idol nor *tulsi* plant at this *akhra*, and cowdung was not used for cleansing purposes. Strong objection was, however, taken at Brindaban to this disregard of what the ordinary Hindu holds sacred, and a more orthodox ritual is now observed.

Ram Krishna, the founder of this place, is held in the greatest veneration, and offerings are made at his shrine by men who desire offspring or the increase of their herds. This section of the Vaishnavites at one time tried to worship an abstract god without shape or form, but this proved to be beyond the spiritual capacities of their disciples, and they sing the praises of Hari, Krishna, Rama and even Chaitanya. Bithangal has completely eclipsed the *akhra* at Masulia near Habiganj, which contains the tomb of Jaganmohan, the founder of the sect. It is the wealthiest and most prosperous *akhra* in Sylhet, and is said to receive as much Rs. 40,000 per annum in the form of offerings from its disciples. The buildings are of considerable size, and are of masonry, and several of the rooms are paved with marble.

Other famous *akhras* are situated at Jugaltila in Sylhet, where the mahunta is invariably a Brahman ; at Panisail in the Indeswar pargana in South Sylhet ; and at Nayagaon in Sunamganj. The last named *akhra* has recently been started in honour of Adwaita, one of Chaitanya's followers, who is said to have been an incarnation of Siva. The *akhra* of Jugaltila is said to have been founded some 200 years ago by one Jugal Kisore mahunta, who is supposed to have been an incarnation of the deity. It is endowed with landed property which brings in from one thousand to fifteen hundred rupees a year, and has some seven or eight hundred disciples, each of whom contributes on the average about As. 12 per mensem towards its maintenance. It is situated on a low hill, approached by a flight of masonry steps, and the idol is placed in an open shed

consisting of a corrugated iron roof supported on wooden posts. There are quarters for some thirty resident disciples, but all of the buildings are mean and squalid, and the place is in no way comparable with the more important *sattras* in Assam.

Other sacred places.

There are other places revered by all Hindus alike, irrespective of their sect. A certain portion of the Panatirtha river, near the village Ghagtia becomes as sacred as the Ganges on the occasion of the Baruni, and pilgrims flock in numbers to bathe in the holy waters. In the south-west corner of the Habiganj subdivision, there is a temple at Krishnapur, at which pilgrims worship after they have bathed in the sacred pool of Brahmakunda, which is situated just across the boundary of Hill Tippera. Another sacred pool is known as Tamptakunda and is situated in pargana Panchbhag in Jaintia. This pool is said to become quite warm on the occasion of the Baruni, and it is possible that the water has in reality some mineral properties. Special sanctity is also said to attach to the place where the Manu and the Kusiyara meet. The absence of any Hindu temples of importance is quite intelligible. Sylhet came under the influence of the Muhammadans at an early date, and, prior to its conquest, there were no local notables of sufficient wealth and power, to erect masonry buildings of any size or permanence. The country seems to have been split up into a number of petty principalities, and these small lordlings of a jungly frontier tract had not the means, even if they had the inclination, of raising temples to the glorification of god's name and the commemoration of

their own. The statement appended to this chapter shows in a consolidated form the various sacred places in the district. Some of these shrines are surmounted by a brick built temple, but in many cases the deity is hidden in a rough unhewn piece of stone, protected from the sun and rain by a miserable hut of bamboo and thatch.

Minor Religions.

Animists	11,337
Jains	141
Brahmos	47
Buddhists	7

The statement in the margin shows the number of persons returned under the different religions which had a comparatively small number of adherents in the district in 1901. The animistic tribes are found at the foot of the hills along the northern and southern boundary, and are Khasis and Garos in the north, and Tipperas in the south. A considerable proportion of the followers of this religion were, however, jungly coolies, Oraons, Santals, and people of that class. The Jains are the Marwari merchants from Rajputana, and the Brahmos are recruited from the ranks of the more thoughtful and educated amongst the Hindus, and are not unnaturally found living in the towns.

Christianity.

The total number of Christians (744) is small, and the number of native Christians (394) smaller still. Sylhet is too civilized to allow of conversion proceeding rapidly, and in the twenty years ending with 1901 the number of native Christians only increased by 130. Members of the Welsh Mission are stationed at Sylhet, Maulavi Bazar, and Karimganj, but they have only met with a small measure of success, and in 1901 they had but 80 followers. This is

not due to any personal hostility towards the preachers of the gospel. A well-known missionary, the Reverend Mr. Pryse, was universally esteemed, and, on his death, the Hindus of the town defrayed the cost of the erection of his tombstone, and founded a library to commemorate his name. On social grounds there are, however, the strongest objections to a change of faith. The neophyte, whether he embraces Christianity or Muhammadanism, has to abjure too much, and there are at present no signs of any general movement towards the adoption of the western creed. The native Christians are distributed fairly impartially over most of the principal sects. In 1901, there were 52 Anglicans, 48 Baptists, 85 members of minor denominations, most of whom failed to specify their sect, and 126 Roman Catholics.

The bulk of the Roman Catholic community live at the village of Bandasil, on the left bank of the Barak, a mile below Badarpur. Their forefathers are said to have been settled there at the beginning of the 18th century by a Muhammadan Nawab, who came from Meerut with a party of Musalmans and Native Christians; the latter, according to the village traditions, being employed to serve his guns. Where the Nawab recruited these men history does not relate, but they are said to have built a fort in Bandasil and to have settled round it. After the Burmese war the Nawab was rewarded for his loyalty by a grant of land in Baniyachung, the proceeds of which enabled the Roman Catholics of Bandasil to live in idleness. Quarrels broke out in the small community, their land was gradually sold to the surrounding villagers, and most of the people now earn their living by domestic

service. Since 1891, there has been a resident Roman Catholic priest at Bandasil.

Occupation.

Sylhet like the rest of Assam is a rural area, but the percentage of the population supported by agriculture (81·5), though high, is lower than in any other district in the plains except Kamrup. The explanation lies in the fact that occupation is somewhat more specialized than in Assam. The functional castes exist, and to some extent follow their traditional occupations, and the spiritual needs of the people have ample provision made for them. The statement in the margin shows the number of persons in the district for each person actually employed as a barber, washerman, or priest in Sylhet, and in Darrang which is a purely rural district. The number of priests is particularly large in Habiganj, and, with real discretion, they avoid the marshy country lying to the north of this subdivision. The fishing industry is of considerable importance in the flooded tracts to the west, where a trade is carried on in cured as well as in dried fish. In North Sylhet the fishermen are not so numerous, and they are comparatively scarce in South Sylhet and Karimganj, where the level of the country rises, and the area of submerged land is not so large. The greater portion of Sylhet is permanently settled, but settlement was made direct with the actual cultivators, and the number of estates is unusually large. According to the census returns, which have, however, in a matter of this kind to be accepted with a certain degree of caution, nearly one-third of the

Number of persons to each.	Sylhet.	Darrang.
Barber	769	3,666
Washerman	739	2,656
Priest	227	1,629

total agricultural population were cultivating their own land. In North Sylhet, the number of persons holding direct from Government was almost equal to the number of tenants, but the subdivision includes the Jaintia Parganas which are temporarily settled. In Karimganj also, the number of landholders is about two-thirds of that of the tenants, but in the three remaining subdivisions the tenants are in a very large majority. The only occupations in addition to those mentioned, which in 1901 supported more than one per cent. of the total population, were garden labour, general labour, and begging. Women do not, as a rule, work in the fields in Sylhet, and the proportion of actual workers is thus considerably lower than in Assam proper. In 1901, the workers only formed 38 per cent. of the whole, as compared with 67 per cent. in a district like Lakhimpur. Further details with regard to the occupations of the people will be found in Table IV.

Leading families.

The wealthiest family of Sylhet is that of Maulavi Ali Amjad Khan of Langla. The founder of the family was one Maulavi Muhammad Rabi, who was tutor to the sons of the Nawab of Murshidabad, and in 1735 A.D. received as a reward a large *jaghir* of land near his house at Langla. His son Maulavi Muhammad Ali Khan was appointed Kazi of Sylhet in 1773 A.D., and his estates were assessed to revenue in 1819 A.D. He was succeeded by his son Gous Ali Khan, who was accused of having supplied rations to the mutineers in 1857, but was acquitted of the charge, and was the grandfather of the present zamindar.

The Mauzumdar family.

One of the most respected, though not one of the wealthiest families in Sylhet, are the Mauzumdars. The founder of the family was Surwar Khan, who, in 1464 A.D., reduced to order the revolting Zamindars of Ita and Pratapgarh. His son, Mir Khan, was appointed Kanungo of Sylhet, and this office remained in the family till it was finally abolished at the time of the permanent settlement. Several places in the district take their names from different members of this family. Thus Jahanpur is called after Jahan, son of Lodi Khan, who subdued Khoja Osman Khan, the zamindar of Bhanugach. Keshwar Khan, who held office in the time of Aurangzeb, dug a canal which is still called Keshwar Khal, and Mahtab Khan, his son, founded a bazar which bears his name. The present representative of the family, Khan Majid Bakht Bahadur, was for some time a Deputy Magistrate in Bengal and an Extra Assistant Commissioner in Assam. His father Saiyed Bakht resided for several years in Mecca, and was made a member of the Sherif's Council and decorated with the Star of the Mejidhi. Both he and his son, Hamid Bakht, were exempted from attendance in the civil courts, a privilege which is at the present moment (1904) accorded to only one individual in the Province, the gosain of the Dakhinpat, *sattra* in Sibsagar.

The Dastidars.

The Dastidars are said to be descended from the same stock as the Mauzumdars, though the latter family were converted to the faith of Islam in the 15th century, while the Dastidars have remained faithful to the Hinduism of their forefathers.

The founder of the family, Kabiballabh, was appointed Dastidar of Sylhet, and in that capacity had charge of the royal seal. Hare Krishna, who in 1722 was appointed Amil of Sylhet, is perhaps the best known member of the family, which at the present day has lost most of its former wealth.

The Dewan family.

The Dewan family was founded by a native of the Hooghli district, who settled in Sylhet in the middle of the 16th century. One of his descendants, named Manik Chandra, was appointed Dewan, and his son, Murari Chand, was, in his time, one of the most conspicuous figures in the society of the district. The present head of the family, Raja Giris Chandra Roy, is the grandson of this gentleman, and has established a college in the town in honour of his memory. In 1898, the title of Raja was conferred upon him, but his estate has been considerably reduced by his numerous benevolences and generous and hospitable style of living. There is another Dewan family at Baniyachung descended from the Gobind Singh referred to in the second chapter (p. 25.)

Marriage customs.

The great bulk of the Hindus marry in the orthodox way, by what is known as the *prajapatya* form, which corresponds to the *hompura* of the Assam Valley. The ordinary marriage ceremony is much as follows, but the style in which it is carried out depends upon the resources of the contracting parties.

The first thing to be done after a match has been agreed upon is to fix the date for the ceremony. The bridegroom's representatives proceed to the house of the

bride with fish, sweetmeats, curds, and betelnuts, and, on their arrival, the Brahmans of the village are summoned and asked to select an auspicious day. The next stage is known as Panakhili, and consists of the offering of betelnuts and leaves, with two small pieces of gold and silver, to the family idol, or to the idol of a neighbour, if neither of the families possesses an idol of its own. Two nights before the wedding day the bridegroom and the bride are solemnly bathed, and on the following morning the general merry-making begins. A party of drummers is called in, who, with short intervals of rest, keep up their unmelodious music day and night ; the children of the two families are decked out in their best ; the bride and the groom are solemnly bathed ; and friends and relatives assemble from all sides. At night a theatrical performance is given in the bridegroom's house, and a party is despatched to fetch the bride, for in the Surma Valley the actual ceremony generally takes place in the house of the groom. On this night, also, the contracting parties are once more solemnly bathed. Early the next morning a priest sprinkles water over them from a mango leaf, and places a daub of an oleaginous black ointment, called *adibash*, upon their foreheads. During the day the bridegroom, and some male relatives on behalf of the bride, offer oblations to the spirits of their ancestors, and a feast is given to the Brahmans and the assembled guests. In the evening, the contracting parties are again solemnly bathed and attired in their best clothes, and, pending the advent of the bride, who arrives in the middle of the night attended by most unmusical musicians, the groom is allowed to witness the theatrical performance that is going on.

When the time for the actual ceremony has come, he is anointed with sandalwood, a crown of pith and flowers is placed upon his head, and he is escorted to the front of the main house, where a maid or married woman presents him with a ring, a pair of cloths, and some curds. Both parties then enter a small enclosure in the courtyard which has been fenced in with split bamboos and plantain trees, the groom is seated on a stool, and the bride marches round him seven times, throwing flowers and red powder over him as she completes each circuit. The next stage is called *sampradan*, and is the really binding part of the ceremony, when the girl and her dowry are formally handed over to her husband. A fire is then lighted, flowers, rice, and *ghi* are thrown upon it, and the priest utters the appropriate *mantras*. By this time the young pair are thoroughly worn out, and gladly avail themselves of the permission to seek what rest they can for the remainder of the night. On the following day they are again solemnly bathed, and are conducted round four bamboos in the courtyard, and a feast is given to the assembled guests. This ceremony is repeated on the fourth day, as on the intervening day the bride and groom are not allowed to see one another, and the marriage is then said to be complete.

Cost of the Ceremony.

Except among the higher ranks of Hindu society, it is the general practice in Sylhet for a man to purchase his wife. The usual price amongst the lower castes ranges from Rs. 40 to Rs. 50, though a girl can sometimes be obtained for a ten rupee note, a price which could not be thought excessive by even the poorest cultivator. Shahas, on

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the other hand, when marrying into a good family, have been known to salve the conscience of the father by the gift of as much as fifty times that sum. That, after all, is not too much for a wealthy parvenu to pay for the privilege of being allowed to call a respectable Kayastha father-in-law. The other expenses incidental to a marriage are incurred on Brahmans, who expect their customary fee, on musicians, palki-bearers, and other hangers-on, and on fireworks, clothes, presents, and quantities of food. On this an ordinary cultivator will expend some Rs. 30 or 40, but a rich man's wedding may cost anything up to Rs. 1,000. Widow re-marriage is regarded with growing disfavour, even amongst the lowest castes, with the natural result that there is an increasing difficulty in obtaining wives. Even if every Hindu woman were pressed into the service, some thousands of men would still remain unwed. Under these circumstances it seems a lamentable waste of good material to leave some 60,000 Hindu widows, none younger than fifteen and none as much as forty, to lead a depressing life of dreary solitude. In the Habiganj subdivision, the Bengal custom of paying for the bridegroom is gradually gaining ground amongst the upper classes, and the father of the girl is expected, not only to defray the expenses of the wedding, but to pay for the education of his son-in-law as well.

Amongst the Tipperas the familiar form of marriage by service is in vogue, and the man is expected to live some time in the house of his father-in-law and work for him in his *jhums*. The only trace of this custom amongst the Hindus of Sylhet, who differ in this particular from the

Assamese, is to be found in the *ghor jamai*, who is permanently absorbed into the family of his father-in-law. The Manipuris, like the Assamese, sometimes evade the demands of a too avaricious parent by the simple process of carrying off the girl, who offers only a nominal resistance to her abduction. Having obtained possession of her person it is a comparatively easy matter to come to terms, and no social obloquy attaches to the young couple.

As far as the feasting and general merry-making is concerned the Muhammadan marriage does not differ materially from the Hindu, but it has, of course, no religious side. The essential parts are the formal assent to the contract given by the bridegroom and the bride, and the execution of the *kabin*.

The following are the principal festivals of the Hindus :—

Hindu festivals.

The Saraswati puja is held in January or February. A clay image of the Goddess of Learning is procured, offerings of flower, leaves, and eatables are made to it, and the worshippers abstain from book and pen. This puja is usually confined to the higher classes of society. The Suryapuja is held in the month of Magh (middle of January, to the middle of February) in honor of the Sun God. A plantain tree is set up in the courtyard and decorated with flowers, and offerings of leaves, eatables, and flowers are made, the women singing all the while in honor of the Sun God. In February or March comes the Sivarati, during which the worshippers fast during the day and sit up at night to worship Siva's lingum and eat bhang and ganja.

About a fortnight later there is the Doljatra. On this occasion the image of Vishnu is worshipped, anointed with red powder, and then swung to and fro, while the people pelt one another with red powder in memory of the amorous contests of Krishna with the milkmaids of Brindaban. Towards the end of March there is the Barunisnan, when ablutions are offered to the spirit of the departed ancestors, and the villagers feast on curds, parched grain, and molasses. The Rath Jatra takes place in June or July, when an image of Vishnu or Jagannath is dragged about on a car. On the last day of Sraban (middle of August) there is the Bishahari or Manasa puja in honour of the goddess of snakes. This puja is very popular in Sylhet, and is observed by all Hindus, high and low, rich and poor alike. Flowers, leaves, and eatables are offered to a clay image of the goddess, and goats, ducks, and pigeons are sacrificed. A few days later the Vaishnavite section of the community, and more specially the Vaishnavite ascetics, or Bairagis as they are called, celebrate the Jhulan festival. Images of Krishna and Radhika are worshipped and swung to and fro. There is much singing on this occasion at night. In the same month, or in the month following, there is the Janmastami in honour of the birth of Krishna. The main feature of this festival, which is observed by every devout Hindu, is abstinence from food and drink. In September or October there is the Durga puja which is a time for general merry-making. New clothes are given to the children, members of the family who are away return home, and there is general feasting and jollification.

The rich purchase clay images of Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Kartik and Ganesh. Poorer people make their offerings to plantain trees or earthen jars filled with water. The puja lasts for four days. Goats are usually sacrificed on each of the first three days and on the third day those who can afford to do so kill a buffalo. On the last day the goddess is worshipped with flowers, leaves, and eatables and then thrown into water amidst singing and beating of cymbals.

Four days after the Durga puja comes the Lakshmi puja, and in the last quarter of the year there are the Kali, Kartik, Jagadhatri and Rash pujas. The last named festival is only observed by the Vaishnavites and is especially popular with the Manipuris.

A special form of religious ceremony is known as the *noaka*, or boat puja, and is performed by a wealthy man in satisfaction of a vow, who generally spends from Rs. 300 to Rs. 500 on the ceremony. A shed is built, at the end of which is a boat painted and gilt, from which rise, tier upon tier, the images of various gods, amongst whom Bishahari is generally the most prominent. For several days sacrifices are offered to the deities, and Brahmans, who are well paid and feasted for their services, offer up their prayers. At the end of this time the house and its contents are abandoned and allowed to fall to pieces. Every Hindu has a *guru*, or religious teacher, to whom he makes an annual offering varying from 2 annas to 5 rupees according to his means.

The Pous or Uttarayan Sankranti, held about the middle of January, has no religious associations and corre-

sponds to the Magh *bihu* of the Assam valley. The villagers light bonfires in the rice fields, at which they warm themselves after the morning bath, and devote the day to merry-making.

Amusements.

In the north and west of the district, where, in the rains, much of the country goes completely under water, boat races are a source of great amusement. The *khel naos*, as they are called, are long narrow canoes, with a peaked stern and prow, which are carved, and painted with the brightest colours. They often carry a crew of forty men, who sit in pairs and paddle with the utmost vigour, while a corybantic individual dances in the centre of the boat, and shrieks out a weird song to the accompaniment of a pair of clashing cymbals. The course is generally a fairly short one, but, as soon as one race is decided, the boat-men paddle slowly back to the starting point, and at once set off again upon their wild career, and the process is repeated time after time till all the competitors are thoroughly exhausted.

Tigers are found near the foot of the Khasi Hills and are netted by the villagers. Directly a kill takes place the tiger is followed by the bravest and most expert shikari and is marked down to his lair. The villagers then turn out armed with spears, daos, and guns, and keep up a terrific din till the place has been surrounded by a strong net fastened to bamboo posts. The space enclosed is generally covered with jungle, in which the unfortunate animal lies hidden, but a heavy log with ropes attached is slipped underneath the net, and dragged

backwards and forwards till the grass is beaten down. Furious at this disturbance the tiger charges the net, but it is driven back with spears and sharp bamboos. As time goes on the animal becomes exhausted from weariness and thirst. A split bamboo is then thrust through the net, and water is poured down it into the huge beast's mouth to revive its flagging energies. During the night, large fires are lighted all around the net, and the people amuse themselves with songs and music. The tiger is sometimes teased and worried for a week or more and no one is allowed to attempt to kill it, till a majority of the whole crowd assembled have decided that the proper time has come. The first shot is then offered to the man of highest rank who happens to be present. Heavy fines are imposed by the village community on any persons who fail to attend on receiving information of the kill, who leave their posts before they are relieved, or who break any of the other rules laid down by the community. In the same portion of the district wild pigs are shot, and, sometimes, speared by men mounted on tame buffaloes. The pig does not notice the man on the buffalo's back, and he is thus enabled to approach sufficiently near to deal a blow which generally proves fatal. Occasionally, also, pigs are speared from trees, but this form of hunting is only crowned with success when the animal breaks cover in exactly the desired direction. In the Sunamganj subdivision, the villagers often race their ponies in the *haors*, the Pous Sankranti being the season of the year which is specially set apart for these local Derbys. Boys and young men play cricket and football, and native games akin to prisoner's base and tip-cheese. Song and music, of course, are popular, and theatrical

performances are given at weddings and on feast days. A special form of dance is known as the *ghatu's* nautch. The *ghatu* is a young Nat boy who is hired by the villagers, often at a considerable salary, to dance to them in the evening. This form of amusement is very popular, but it is doubtful whether it has a very elevating effect upon the moral character of the people, as the *ghatu* is generally treated as a pet by the younger members of the community.

List of Temples.

Place or pargana in which situated.	Name of temple.	Name of founder and date of foundation.	Special god to whom the temple is sacred.	Brief description of building.
		NORTH SYLHET.		
Dhakadakshin—Village Dattarail.	Mahaprabhu ...	Jagannath Misra and others of his family, about 1700 A. D.	Chaitanya and Nityananda.	The masonry building was destroyed by the earthquake of 1897. The idol is now in a *cutcha* house.
Nijpat—Jaintiapuri Raj.	Jaintesvari ...	Not known	Kali.	......
Do. ...	Siva Mandir ...	Do.	Siva ...	Masonry.
Sylhet town ...	Sridurgabari ...	Lala Gour Hari Singh, about 1780 A. D.	Sridurga ...	Corrugated iron roof and masonry walls.
Do. (Kalighat) ...	Kalibari ...	Lala Har Chandra Singh, about 1800 A. D	Kali ...	Do. do.
Do. (Lamabazar)..	Dasnami ...	About 1750 A. D. ...	Kalbhairab ...	Masonry.
		SUNAMGANJ.		
Mandalibogh, pargana Chhatak.	Kalibari ...	Hindu zamindars of Baniyachung, about 1300 A. D.	Kali ...	Do.

List of Akhras.

Place or pargana in which situated.	Name of Akhra.	Name of founder and date of foundation.	Special god to whom the Akhra is sacred.	Brief description of building.
		NORTH SYLHET.		
		BRAHMAN MAHUNTAS.		
Balaganj ...	Madanmohan ...	Residents of Balaganj bazar in 1880 A. D.	Madanmohan ...	Masonry.
Bhatirkhola village ...	Goyalpara ...	About 1750 A. D. ...	Jagannath ...	Do.
Rajaganj ...	Rajaganj ...	......	Brindaban Chandra.	Do.
Sadipur	Sadipur ...	Murari Chand about 1850.		
Sankhi village ...	Lalabazar ...	Jagannath Nazir about 1800 A. D.	Mahaprabhu Krishna Chandra.	Do.
Tengra village ...	Tengra ...	About 1750 A. D. ...	Mahaprabhu ...	*Cutcha.*
Town Sylhet (Dharmapasha.)	Taltola ...	About 1780 A. D. ...	Gobindajee ...	Masonry.
Do. (Gopaltila.)	Gopaltila ...	About 1750 A. D. ...	Gopaljee ...	Do

Do.	(Kazal Haor.)	Jugaltila ...	Jugal Kisore about 1700 A. D.	Radha Madhab...	Do.
Do.	(Kalighat)	Jagannathjee ...	About 1800 A. D. ...	Jagannathjee ...	Do.
Do.	do.	Narsingjee ...	A Sanyasi about 1750 A. D. ...	Narsingjee ...	Do.
Do.	(Mira-bazar.)	Baladebjee ...	Madan Munshi of Raynagar about 1750 A. D.	Baladebjee ...	Do.
Do.	(Nachir Alli.)	Syamsundar ...	About 1850 A. D. ...	Syamsundar ...	*Cutcha.*
Do.	(Noya Sarak.)	Gobindajee ...	Jagannath Nazir of Bagberkhola about 1850 A. D.	Gobindajee ...	Masonry.
Do.	(Zinda-bazar.)	Do. ...	Jasobanta Singh about 1800 A. D.	Do. ...	*Cutcha.*
Do.	do.	Jagannath ...	Hara Krishna Gosain, about 1750 A. D.	Jagannath ...	Do.
			SUNAMGANJ.		
			BRAHMAN MAHUNTAS.		
Jagannathpur ...		Basudeberbari...	In the 15th century A. D. ...	Basudeb ...	*Cutcha.*
Town Sunamganj ...		Akhra ...	Sunamdi an ex-soldier about 1800 A. D.	Jagannath ...	Masonry.

List of Akhras—contd.

Place or pargana in which situated.	Name of Akhra.	Name of founder and date of foundation.	Special god to whom the Akhra is sacred.	Brief description of building.
		MAHUNTAS OF OTHER CASTES.		
Chhatak Bazar ...	......	The shop-keepers of Chhatak about 1800 A. D.	Chaitanya ...	Masonry.
Jagannathpur ...	......	The Jagannathpur Chaudhuries about 1800 A. D.	Jagannath ...	*Cutcha.*
Patharia ...	......	Janaki Dasi Baishnabi in 1890 A. D.	Radhamadhab ...	*Cutcha* house.
Puran Laur, pargana Laur ...	......	Golak Chandra Das Purkayastha in 1898 A. D.	Advaita ...	Do.
Tatikona, pargana Chhatak ...	......	Jagannath Chaudhuri about 1800 A. D.	Chaitanya ...	Masonry.
		HABIGANJ.		
		BRAHMAN MAHUNTAS.		
Ghatia	Mahaprabhur Akhra.	Ram Narayan and Raj Narayan Shaha.	Gauranga Mahaprabhu.	Masonry.

Kamrapur ...	Narsingh "	Hara Sundari Chaudhurani ...	Jagannath Balaram and Subhadra	Do.
Murakari ...	Bara "	Krishna Chandra Gosain ...	Radha Gobinda	Do.
Nabiganj Bazar ...	Gobindajee "	Krishna Das Namayat ...	Gobindajee ...	Do.
Noagaon ...	Giridhari "	......	Giridhari ...	*Cutcha.*
Barisal	Mahaprabhu "	Lal Singh Chaudhuri of Barisal about 1700 A. D.	Mahaprabhu ...	Masonry.
		MAHUNTAS OF OTHER CASTES.		
Bithangal ...	Bithangal large Akhra.	Ram Krishna Gosain, date uncertain.	Tomb of Ram Krishna Gosain.	Do.
Ikram	Mahaprabhu "	Bidura Nanda Gosain, about 1840 A. D.	Gauranga Mahaprabhu.	Do.
Jangal Baula ...	Ramkrishna Gosain Akhra.	......	Ram Krishna Gosain.	Do.
Krishnapur ...	Krishna Gosain Akhra.	......	Do.	Do.
Raki	Jagabandhu Akhra.	A Raja of Hill Tippera, date uncertain.	Jagabandhu ...	*Cutcha.*
Srimangal ...	Bithangal new Akhra.	Ananta Das Baisnab about 1820 A. D.	Ram Krishna Gosain.	Masonry.

List of Akhras—concld.

Place or pargana in which situated.	Name of Akhra.	Name of founder and date of foundation.	Special god to whom the temple is sacred.	Brief description of building.
		SOUTH SYLHET.		
		BRAHMAN MAHUNTAS.		
Lalapur known as Panisail, pargana Indesvar.	Panisail East Akhra.	Santaram Prabhu of Panisail about 1700 A. D.	Krishna ...	Masonry.
Do. ...	Do. West Akhra.	Do. do.	Do. ...	Do.
		MAHUNTAS OF OTHER CASTES.		
Abda, pargana Ita ...	Abdar Vishnu-pad.	Anup Ram Datta of Gayghar in 1788 A. D.	Vishnu ...	*Cutcha.*
Akhailkura, pargana Shamshernagar.	Akhaikura Akhra	Jagannath Das in 1834 A. D.	Jagannath ...	Masonry.
Biraimabad, pargana Shamshernagar.	Ajnaner Dewal	Kashi Ram Das of Panchgaon in 1754 A. D.	Krishna ...	*Cutcha.*
Dattapara known as Chandpur, pargana Hauli Satrasati.	Chandpur Akhra	Jiban, an ascetic about 1700 A. D.	Jagannath and Bura Thakur.	Do.

Unlike the temples and *sattras* in the Assam Valley, these places have not been endowed by the pious founder with a grant of land. Most of them own the actual sites on which they stand, but beyond this nothing more, and the largest estate is only about 450 acres which is held by the Patharia Akhra in Sunamganj.

CHAPTER IV.

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTS.

Agriculture—Rice—Mustard and Pulse—Linseed and Til—Sugarcane—Jute—Cotton—Garden Crops—Agricultural Implements—Storage and Threshing of Grain—Causes affecting productiveness of land—Yield and Value of Crops—General Remarks—Live Stock—Floods—Development of Tea Industry—Labourers employed—Soil required—Varieties of Plant—System of Cultivation and Manufacture—Green Tea—Outturn and Prices—Forests.

Agriculture.

The principal crops grown in the district are rice, which is the staple food grain, tea, mustard, pulse, linseed, sesamum or til, sugar cane, jute and cotton ; but, as the greater part of Sylhet is permanently settled and has not been cadastrally surveyed, there are no reliable data to show the area planted out with each of these different staples. In this, as in other matters, the historian of Sylhet labours under special difficulties, due to Mr. Willes' decennial settlement. It is impossible to trace the extension of cultivation, it is impossible to say, even at the present day, what proportion of the district is under crop, what proportion fallow, and what proportion waste, it is impossible to mark the rise or fall of any staple in the estimation of the peasants. Offensive though this doubtless is to the precise mind of the statistician, it is doubtful whether the practical loss is in reality very great. Although we cannot express the fact in percentages worked out to several places of decimals, we still can feel assured that Sylhet is densely peopled, that the proportion of good waste land available for cultivation is very small, and that during the last century there was

a great extension of the area under the plough. We know that the staple food grain is rice, that in normal years the district produces much more than it can possibly consume,* and that the chance of anything even approaching scarcity is very small. The direct intervention of Government is so seldom necessary, that we can acquiesce, with some show of grace, in general knowledge, as distinguished from the particular information available for other districts. In the following paragraphs some account is given of the system followed for the cultivation of the various crops.

Rice. Sall.

Rice, as has already been said, is the staple food crop, and probably covers two million acres of land. It falls into four main divisions, *sail*, which is transplanted on higher land, and *aman*, which is sown broadcast or transplanted on lower land, and, like *sail*, is reaped in winter; and *aus* and *boro*, both of which belong to the category of summer rice.

Sail is first sown broadcast in little beds or nurseries. The land is broken up in April or May, is ploughed five or six times till it is reduced to a fine puddle of mud, and is not unfrequently manured with cowdung and sweepings. The size of the nursery varies with the area to be planted out, but generally stands to the rice fields in

* In 1850 Dr. Hooker wrote as follows: "The Silchar rice is of admirable quality, and much is imported to Sylhet, the jheels not producing grain enough for the consumption of the people. Though Silchar grows enough for ten times its population, there was actually a famine six weeks before our arrival, the demand from Sylhet being so great."—Himalayan Journals, Vol. II., p. 319. Sylhet has always been in normal years a great rice exporting district, and it is difficult to believe that it at any time drew its food supplies from Cachar. At the present day of course rice goes from Sylhet to Cachar.

the proportion of from 1 to 14 to 1 to 18. The seed, which has been selected from the largest ears of the previous year's crop, is sown broadcast over the bed, and at the beginning of summer these patches of the brightest green herbage are a striking feature in the rural landscape. In the meanwhile the fields are being got ready for the reception of the seedlings. The husbandman starts ploughing as soon as the soil is softened by the spring rain, and repeats the process from four to six times, till he has reduced the land to a rich puddle. After the third ploughing the field is harrowed, and the little embankments, a few inches high, intended to retain the water, are repaired. When the seedlings are about seven or eight weeks old, they are taken from the nursery bed and carried in large bundles to the field. Here they are planted out in handfuls (*gusi*), each of which contains four or five plants. The distance at which these are planted from one another depends upon the fertility of the soil, but the handfuls are generally placed about 9 inches apart. It is not unfrequently the practice to steep the young plants in water before they are planted out, and, if they seem too luxuriant, the tops are cut off when they are removed from the nursery. Transplanting goes on from the beginning of July to the middle of September. The work is of a most arduous description, as it involves stooping for hours in a field of liquid mud, under the rays of a burning tropical sun. Before the end of the rains the crop is fully grown though the ears are still empty ; but about the beginning of October they begin to fill, and the field to turn to a rich yellow. From the middle of November to the middle of January harvesting is going on. The reapers

grasp a handful of the ears and cut them off about eight inches below the head. These handfuls (*hatta*) are tied up with a piece of straw, and made up into bundles, which are affixed to either end of the bamboos which the villagers carry across their shoulders. The principal kinds of *sail* are *terab-uli*, which ripens early about the beginning of December and has a large yellow grain, *balam* which has a large reddish grain, *khai* which has a large yellowish grain, and *thakur bhog* which has a fine grain and is extremely palatable. *Sail* is often grown on land from which a crop of *aus* has been already taken.

Aman.

Aman is sown broadcast about the middle of April, the field having been previously prepared by four or five ploughings. It is grown in flooded tracts, and the embankments made between the fields are smaller than in the case of *sail*, and are often dispensed with altogether. There are three principal varieties. *Bhogdhan* is grown on higher land, is sown earlier, and ripens in November. *Parisok* and *badal* thrive in deeper water and are not harvested till December. Other varieties reported are *lengri*, *hiraman*, *gutakh*, *hater mura*, *paricha*, *goyai*, *kalakura*, *dudbal*, *naliuri*, *jari*, *longmur betair*, and *birun*. Of these *goyai*, *kalakura*, and *hiraman* have a long stem and so are generally grown in low lying tracts. *Badal*, *paricha*, *lengri*, and *gutakh* grow to a medium height and are sown on land which is neither very high nor very low. The other kinds grow on moderately high lands. *Dudbal*, *naliuri*, *jari*, and *longmur* are generally sown on land which lies near the hills.

Aus.

Aus is generally grown near village sites, on the edge of *haors*, and on the banks of the rivers, which are usually above the level of the surrounding country. Ploughing usually begins when the ground has been softened by the rains of March, and is repeated some five or six times. The seed is sown broadcast in April and May, and the plant grows with such rapidity that it is ready for the sickle in June or July. *Aus* is sometimes transplanted, and is generally followed by a crop of *sail*. This kind of rice is usually cut off close by the ground, as, at the season of the year when it is reaped, the straw is in much request for fodder. The principal varieties of *aus* are *dumahi* which ripens in 2½ months, *chengri* which takes 3 months to mature, and *murali* which is sown on low lying land and is ready in about 4 months. *Hati* is so called because in theory it takes 60 days to ripen, though in practice it generally requires from two to four weeks more. The yield varies with the length of time the crop is in the ground, and the outturn of *dumahi* or *hati* is considerably less than that of the slower growing varieties. In spite of the rapidity with which *aus* ripens it can be seen in some part of the district at most seasons of the year. Low land *aus* is sometimes sown at the beginning of February, and in places the harvesting is still in progress in the middle of October.

Boro.

Boro is an early rice which is grown in *haors*, and more especially in the Sunamganj subdivision, before the floods rise. It is sown on high land near *bils* and streams, on low land which is under water at the time of transplantation

but dries up shortly afterwards, and on land which lies so low that it can dispense with what is required by the first two kinds of land, *i.e.*, artificial irrigation. A further advantage appertains to this low land in that no ploughing is required, but the crop is very liable to be destroyed by flood, and the outturn for *boro* is comparatively small. *Boro* rice is, however, generally grown on the sides of *haors*, after the floods subside, and is irrigated from the water which remains at the bottom of the basin, and is prevented from escaping by dams which also serve to raise its level. A simple form of water-lift is employed to raise the water from this central reservoir on to the fields. The trunk of a tree is hollowed out and an opening is left all along the upper surface. This trunk is placed at the edge of the reservoir, and the end that projects above the water is fastened by a rope to a stout bamboo that is fixed at right-angles to a bamboo upright. To the further end of this bamboo a heavy weight is affixed, which raises the opposite end and the hollow trunk attached to it, well above the water. When a man wishes to work the lift he stands on the further end of the hollow trunk and presses it below the water, which promptly runs in through the slit. He then steps off, the weight of the stone comes in to play, and the water is tilted up and runs into a channel just above the reservoir. The slope of the *haors* is very gradual, and by means of a series of these *kunds*, as they are called, the water is raised from the reservoir in the centre and distributed upwards from terrace to terrace. Towards the end of October, the fields are cleared of the aquatic plants that have taken root there in the rains, and the nursery beds are

prepared for the reception of the seed. The seed itself is soaked in water for four hours, then kept in a cool place for thirty-six hours, washed again, and left uncovered till the grain begins to shoot. It is then sown broadcast on the nursery and left to grow there for about two months. The young plants are then pulled up, kept for two days in a muddy place to allow the roots to develop, and finally planted out in the fields in January and February. The crop takes about three months to ripen, and, if it is submerged by an early flood, the villagers try to gather all they can by diving to the bottom, or by pulling it up with bamboo hooks. The cultivation of *boro* rice gives rise to a good deal of quarrelling. The owners of low land sometimes protect their crop by building dams which injure the fields of others, water is occasionally stolen, and the necessity for co-operation in the construction of dams and irrigation channels is a source of friction. This kind of rice is divided into two classes: *Sailboro*, and *boro*. The principal varieties of the former are *sail*, *tepi*, *banajira*, *pankait*, *bashful*, *atuatopa*, *rata*, *chandana*, *naluatopa*, *gharmura*, *saulpani*, *barsail*, *harnarata*, and of the latter, *boro*, *kali boro*, *khaiya boro*, *lara boro*, *dhali boro* and *guabhir boro*.

Mustard and Pulse.

Mustard is grown on low lying land in the Jaintia Parganas, which, in its natural state, is covered with high grass and reeds, on high land near the homestead from which a crop of seedlings has been already taken, and in *haors*. The total area under this plant is estimated at some 37,000 acres.

In Jaintia, the jungle is burnt at the beginning of the cold weather, and the ashes serve the purpose of manure. The seed is sown at the beginning of November after a single ploughing, and even this is occasionally dispensed with. In *haors* more ploughing is required, and the harvest is extremely insecure, as heavy rain in early spring may ruin the whole crop. High land near the homestead is ploughed some seven or eight times till reduced to dust, and is generally manured. The plants when ripe are pulled up, and the seed is trodden out by bullocks or threshed out with sticks. The area under pulse is comparatively small; the commonest varieties are *arhar* (*cajanus indicus*) and *maskalai* (*phaseolus mungo radiatus*).

Linseed and Til.

Linseed, like mustard, is grown on high land near the village site as well as in the *haors*. The ground is ploughed up twice or thrice in December, the seed is sown, and the crop is ready for harvest towards the end of March. The plants are then pulled up and dried, the seed is trodden out by cattle or threshed out with a stick, and finally sifted and winnowed. Heavy rain in March is injurious to the crop, and pigs near the Khasi Hills often do damage.

Til (*sesamum indicum*) is generally grown near the village site, and is almost a garden crop. The land is ploughed five or six times till reduced to a fine tilth, and is divided into little blocks about five feet square, by trenches three inches deep and nine inches broad. When the plants are about six inches high they are carefully weeded and hoed, and earth is spread over

their roots. The seed ripens in May, and the plants are dried and treated in the same way as linseed. Linseed is said to cover some sixty-nine or seventy thousand acres, whereas *til* is not grown on more than three or four thousand acres.

Sugar Cane.

The area under sugar cane is said to be declining, as the profits obtained are considered hardly commensurate with the labour that it entails. It is sometimes planted on high land near the homestead, but the bulk of the area under cane is situated in the hills to the south of the Karimganj and South Sylhet subdivisions, where it is grown by ex-garden coolies. The following are the principal varieties cultivated in the district. The *dhol* or *dhali* stands about seven feet high, and is generally grown near homesteads, the *khagra* is a hard and thin variety of the *dhali*, and the *bombai* is of a purple colour and is juicier than either of the other two. The land is hoed up till it is reduced to a fine tilth, and the tops planted in trenches between April and June. The patch is fenced with split bamboo, and there is usually a stout hedge of *arhar dal* (*cajanus indicus*), but constant watching is required to scare away jackals and other animals, and an empty oil tin with a clapper is generally to be seen suspended over each field. While the crop is growing it is continually hoed and weeded, and about August the leaves should be tied up round each cluster of canes, which is a troublesome proceeding. The earth from the ridges is heaped about the roots to strengthen their hold upon the soil, and this process is continued until the relative positions of

ridge and trench are reversed, and the canes stand upon ridges with the trenches in between.

Preparation of molasses.

The native form of mill consists of two wooden rollers, fixed side by side in a trough hollowed out of a heavy block of wood. The tops of the two rollers pass through a beam, supported by uprights let through the lower block of wood into the ground, and are cut into the form of screws which fit into one another. To the larger of the two is affixed a pole, which is driven round in a circle, and thus causes the rollers to revolve. The motive power is usually supplied by the villagers themselves, but buffaloes are occasionally used for the work. Of recent years the wooden mill has been largely displaced by the iron mill which is easier to work. The cane is placed between the rollers, and crushed as it is slowly forced through. The juice trickles from the trough into an earthen vessel, and is then transferred to a small boat scooped out of a log. When twelve or fifteen gallons have been collected boiling begins. The furnace is hollowed out of the ground, and has four circular openings to receive the cauldrons, which are made of the most durable kinds of potter's clay. Two of these vessels are placed about 9 feet from the furnace mouth, and only serve to heat the juice before it is transferred to the other vessels to be boiled. When the juice has been reduced to the proper condition it is ladled into a wooden vessel shaped like a small dug out, and is stirred for half an hour. As the stirring continues the liquid loses its dark brown colour, and assumes the consistency and hue of yellow mud. It is then stored in earthen pots and the process

is complete. Pargana Taraf in the Habiganj subdivision is especially noted for the excellence of the molasses manufactured there.

Jute.

The cultivation of jute is said to be extending but has not yet attained to any great dimensions, and in 1903-04 the total estimated area under this crop was only 9,200 acres. The plant is grown on high land near the village, and on the banks of the Kusiyara and the Manu in the North and South Sylhet subdivisions. The land is ploughed, and ploughed deeply, some eight or ten times. The seeds are sown in March or April, and when the plants are from some ten to fifteen inches high, a harrow (*bindha*), with teeth nearly one foot in length, is dragged over the field, and loosens the soil at the same time that it removes the weeds. When the plant is sown near the homestead the ground is liberally manured with cow-dung.

The plants are cut in August and September, stripped of their leaves, tied in bundles, and left to rot in pools of water from seven to twelve days. When they are ready a handful of stems is taken up, broken in the middle, and beaten to and fro in the water, till the inner part drops out and only the fibre remains. The bundles of fibre are then dried and are ready for transport to the market. The leaves of the jute plant are eaten fresh as a vegetable, and when dried are thought to possess medicinal properties. Small patches of rhea (*boehmeria nivea*) are grown in the gardens of the fishing castes, where it is heavily manured. The skin is stripped off from the stem and the fibre separated from the outer covering. The

thread obtained is exceptionally strong and durable, but the difficulty of decortication has hitherto prevented the growth of rhea on a commercial scale.

Cotton.

Cotton is grown by Tipperas on the hills in the south of the district. The fibre is stiff and has a short staple, but the percentage of fibre to seed is unusually high.

Garden crops.

One of the commonest of garden trees is the plantain (*musa sapientum*), of which there are several varieties. The best fruit is obtained from the *chenichampa*, which has a small well flavoured fruit, the *kulapati* and *safari*, large trees which yield large plantains, and the *dingamanik*, which has a soft trunk and long fruits, which are generally gathered and sold while still quite green, as if kept when ripe they soon develop a saline taste. There are two kinds of *athia* known as *ghi* and *bhim*. Both are valued for their soft leaves and the coolness of the pulp, but the former is preferred as it has fewer seeds. The *kachakala* has the same shape as the *athia*, but has a sharper taste and is generally used as a vegetable. Other varieties of the plantain are the *sail* or *gopi*, the *bartaban*, and *gerasunder*. The betelnut (*areca catechu*) is very common in the eastern part of the district, where groves of these graceful palms add much to the beauty of the landscape. The tree does not thrive if the roots are covered with water, and it is seldom seen in the submerged tracts in the western portion of Sylhet. Of recent years it has been attacked by an insect pest which makes it gradually shrivel up and die. The *pan* vine (*piper betel*) is occasionally trained up the stem of

the areca palm, but is generally grown by Baruis in carefully fenced gardens along the banks of the Kusiyara or Manu, or in the hilly-country to the south. Other common fruit trees are the jack fruit and the mango, but the fruit of the latter tree is generally spoilt by worms. The vegetables which are most in evidence are gourds, pumpkins, cucumbers, beans, different kinds of arums (*kachu*), some of which attain an enormous size, radishes, and brinjals.

Agricultural implements. The plough.

The agricultural implements in use are of a very simple character. The plough is usually made of the mango or jack fruit tree, or some other hard wood. It consists of three parts—the handle and body which are usually all in one piece, the pole which joins the plough at the junction of the handle and the body, and the yoke, which is merely a piece of bamboo fastened by rope at right angles to the pole, with pegs affixed to it to keep it from sliding from the necks of the bullocks. The front portion of the body is sharpened to a point which is shod with iron. The whole instrument is suited to the wretched class of animal required to draw it. It weighs as a rule about 20lbs., and, when cattle are used, the yoke seldom stands as much as 36 inches from the ground. When buffaloes are employed the whole plough is constructed on a larger scale. It is obvious that such an implement can only penetrate from three to four inches into the soil, but the wretched quality of the plough cattle prohibits the use of a more effective instrument. Ploughs in Sylhet are nearly always purchased, and not made at home as in the Assam Valley, and cost from As. 12 to Re. 1.

Other implements.

The harrow (*moi*) is generally a bamboo ladder, about eight feet in length, on which a man stands as it is drawn across the field. It is used to crush the clods turned up by the plough before mustard or summer rice is sown, and to reduce the fields required for wet rice to puddle. Its place is sometimes taken by a plain log of wood. It is prepared by the cultivator himself from the bamboos growing in his garden. Hoes (*kodalis*) are used to trim the embankments (*ails*) which help to retain the water. The head is bought in the bazar and costs from As. 12 to Re. 1-4, and is fitted with a shaft by the farmer himself. Sickles, with which the rice is reaped, have also to be purchased, and cost from two to four annas. The sugarcane mill has been already described in the paragraph dealing with the preparation of molasses. The ordinary implement used for husking grain is the *dheki*, a long beam with a pestle affixed at the end, which is supported by two posts at about two-thirds of the length from the head. The shorter end is depressed by the foot, and the pestle is thus raised into the air; the weight is then removed and the pestle falls into a small hole in which the grain is placed. When only a small quantity of grain is to be husked a mortar (*gyle*) and pestle (*sekait* or *chhia*) are employed. All of these implements are usually made by carpenters and purchased by the cultivator.

Storage and threshing of grain.

The grain is threshed as soon as it is brought from the field, and stored either in a separate granary (*bhararghor*), or, more usually, in a part of one of the cultivator's houses which has been set apart for the purpose. It is

threshed by driving cattle round and round over the heap of grain and straw, till the ears have been finally separated from the stalk. The grain is next passed through a sieve, and placed in a flat bamboo tray called *kula*. It is then jerked into the air and allowed to drop back into the tray, or held aloft and allowed to fall slowly to the ground till gradually the chaff is carried off.

Causes affecting productiveness of land.

The character of the rice crop depends more upon a suitable supply of water than upon the chemical constituents of the soil on which it is grown, and of water in Sylhet there is very seldom any scarcity. It is however, flood, not drought, that is the farmer's enemy, and the harvest often suffers from excessive and unseasonable rain. The different soils of the district have never been carefully examined, but the following kinds are recognised by the cultivator. *Domarua* or *domatiya* is composed of clay with a slight admixture of sand, and is well suited to the growth of double crops. *Athalu* is a heavy clayey soil on which *aman* is generally grown, while *chegua* contains a large proportion of decayed vegetable matter, and is found in low swampy ground. Rice planted on this soil at first does well but tends to produce more leaf than grain. *Balua*, a sandy soil found near the rivers which issue from the northern hills, is far from fertile, and *bhurburia*, a clay soil much broken up by worms, is thought to be more suitable for vegetables than for rice.

Insect pests.

Serious damage is sometimes done to the growing crop by the insects which are called *khatra*, *loai*, *poka*, and *monu* (*leptocorisa acuta*). The *monu* is a small bug which injures the rice plant by feeding on the stems and sucking all the sap from the young grains. It is most prevalent in July and August, and is particularly in evidence during a spell of hot dry weather. High wind and rains drive it back into the jungles, and good results are obtained by lighting fires, of vegetable refuse to windward. The best remedy of all is to collect the insects by smearing a winnowing fan with some glutinous substance and brushing it over the ears of grain, when many of the bugs will be found adhering to the fan. This remedy should be tried in the morning or late afternoon, as the insects do not feed in the heat of the day. The *khatra* appears in April and May, the *loai* in May and June and the *poka* in November and December. Rain is wanted when sail is sown and is transplanted, but is not needed for the sowing of *aus* and *aman*. During every stage of its growth the plant is benefited by moderate showers, but rain is absolutely essential at the time when the ears are first appearing. Hail storms in December sometimes lay the crop and add materially to the cost of reaping, but fortunately are very local in their action.

Yield and value of crops.

The outturn of different crops varies according to the character of the season, and also to a great extent according to the character and level of the soil on which they are grown.

	lbs.
Sail	1,000
Aus	800
Aman	950
Boro	1,050
Mustard	450
Molasses	2,400

The statement in the margin shows the normal yield per acre laid down by the Agricultural Department after a long series of experiments. These figures only represent a general mean, and, even in a normal year, there are many fields whose outturn varies largely from the average. The yield of rice, it may be premised, is expressed in terms of husked grain. Like the outturn, the cash value of the crop can only be approximately ascertained. The prices obtained by the raiyats vary to some extent in different parts of the district, but probably average from Re. 1-4-0 to Re. 1-12-0 per maund of unhusked grain. Assuming that unhusked paddy yields 62 per cent. of clean rice, it would appear that the value of the harvest from an acre of *sail*, *boro*, or *aman* is roughly from 25 to 35 rupees, and from an acre of *aus* from 20 to 30 rupees. For mustard the villagers generally get from Rs. 2-12 to Rs. 4 a maund, so that the yield from one acre is worth from 15 to 22 rupees. The price of molasses varies considerably from time to time and from place to place, and ranges from Rs. 4 to Rs. 6 per maund. The value of the yield of an acre of cane ranges accordingly from Rs. 120 to Rs. 180.

General remarks.

There is very little, as yet, in the shape of intensive cultivation, the villagers do little or nothing to improve the character of the crop beyond selecting the best grain for seed, and manure is seldom used. Cowdung is scattered over the seedling beds and jute fields, and applied to garden crops, but large quantities of this excellent fertilizer are

allowed to go to waste. Sugarcane is often treated with oil cake, and, in parts of the district, the stubble and sods turned up by the plough are burned, and the ashes help to fertilize the soil. Mustard land also is enriched with the ashes of the jungle growing on it. As a general rule the peasant trusts to the heavy rainfall and to deposits of silt to do all that is required, and does not adopt either new methods or new staples. The cultivation of jute is, however, spreading, and in Madhabpur onions and potatoes are coming into favour. The majority of the farmers are small men, who have neither the means nor the knowledge which are requisite in the pioneer ; and little improvement can be looked for, unless Government or some of the larger zamindars are prepared to show the way. The system of giving advances on the standing crop is not much in vogue. An exception must be made in the case of jute, but the total area under this fibre is not large. In Karimganj small advances are sometimes given for mustard, linseed, cotton, and molasses, which are then sold to the creditor at a price a little below that ruling in the open market, but only a small share of the profits of the farmer are diverted by this channel into the pockets of the capitalist.

Live stock. Buffaloes.

There are three varieties of buffalo in Sylhet, the Manipuri which comes from the state of that name, the Bangar which is imported from other parts of India, and a hybrid formed by crossing the other two. The Bangar, though a much more satisfactory animal than the cow or bullock of

Sylhet, is inferior both in size and appearance to the hybrid, which again is not as fine an animal as a pure bred Manipuri.

Professional graziers are not so numerous as in the Assam Valley, the scarcity of pasture in the rains being no doubt a serious difficulty. There are some ten herds of buffaloes in the Dharmapasha thana on the extreme west of the Sunamganj subdivision, four in Fenchuganj, Maulavi Bazar, and Rajnagar, one or two in Matiganj and Karimganj, and fifteen or sixteen in the Hakaluki *haor*. Elsewhere the number of professional graziers is very small.

A cow is said to remain in milk for about ten months and yields at the beginning from two to four seers every day. The amount gradually decreases till a month or so before the next calf comes, when it ceases altogether. The milk is very white and rich in fatty matters, and consequently yields a large proportion of *ghi*. The cows are said to begin breeding when three years old, and to continue doing so for fifteen years, during which time they give birth on the average to about ten calves. The normal life of a buffalo is from 25 to 30 years. Age is judged by the incisor teeth, and a buffalo is not aged till it is twelve years old. Male buffaloes vary in price from Rs. 20 to Rs. 100, and cows from Rs. 30 to Rs. 120. The Bangar buffaloes are cheaper than the hybrids, and much less costly than the fine animals of Manipuri breed. The prices paid in the Jaintia Parganas are considerably higher than those prevailing in the west and south of the district.

Cattle. The cattle of Sylhet are some of the sorriest of their kind, and are undersized, half starved, and not unfrequently diseased. Everything is left to that stern stepmother, Nature, from the time when the most active, and probably therefore the youngest, bull in the herd has succeeded in covering a cow, to the time when the progeny, worn out by semi-starvation and over work lies down to die. No attention is paid to breeding, cows and bulls alike exercise their reproductive powers at the earliest possible moment, and continue to do so without intermission. The parents of the calf are often close relations, and no attempt is ever made to effect any improvements in the stock. In cases of sickness remedies are seldom thought of, and the infected animal is allowed to mingle with the herd. The natural result is the production of a breed of undersized, weak, and miserable animals which are hardly strong enough to drag even the small native plough. Bullocks and cows alike are said to cost from Rs. 10 to Rs. 50, but it is very seldom that the higher price is paid. Rs. 15 to Rs. 20 is the more usual figure and the animals are generally dear at that.

Grazing. In the Sunamganj subdivision, there is excellent grazing to be obtained in the cold weather when the floods drain off from the marshes, but during the rains the condition of the live stock is far from satisfactory. Nearly the whole of the country goes under water, and the cattle have to be kept in the immediate neighbourhood of the homestead and are fed on reeds and coarse grass, brought in boats from the higher ground at the foot of the hills, or on

aquatic plants and grass pulled from the bottom of the *jhils*. Rice straw, it is said, is not very generally used, partly because the floods come on very soon after the reaping of the *boro* crop, partly because the straw decomposes very rapidly. In the Habiganj subdivision, the people graze their cattle on the Raghunandan and Satgaon hills, but the area available has been considerably decreased of recent years by the opening of tea gardens. In the north and west, there are marshes which afford excellent fodder in the dry season, but this part of the district is very densely peopled and the villagers are said to experience difficulty in obtaining food for their cattle in the rains. Grass and rice straw are stored against this time of scarcity, but the supply not unfrequently runs short, and thefts of fodder are said to be fairly common. The conditions in North Sylhet are very similar. In Karimganj there is a considerable area of high land on which the cattle can be grazed during the rains, and in the dry season the most excellent pasture can be obtained in the Hakaluki *haor*, and in other places, such as the Anair and Hanra Kuri *haors* and the Chapra and Medal *bils*. Rice Straw, as in other parts of the district, is stored for use in the rainy season, but at its best it is unsatisfactory fodder, and it is, perhaps, partly responsible for the poor condition of the Sylhetti cattle.

Cattle disease.

The most common forms of cattle disease prevalent in the district are, foot and mouth disease, rinderpest (*guti*), a disease called *kachua*, the principal symptoms of which are flatulence and diarrhœa, diarrhœa (*marki*), cholera,

matikhoa, the first symptom of which is, as the name implies, the eating of earth followed by dysentery, and *sukuna* when the animal refuses to eat and dies after ten days or in a fortnight.

Goats, sheep and ponies.

The goats are almost as degenerate as the cattle. They yield but little milk, the whole of which is taken by the kids, and are only kept for food or sacrifice. At night they are usually shut up in a small out house with a raised floor, which is approached by a slanting board or sloping bamboo platform, as a protection against jackals. There is no indigenous breed of sheep, and the animals imported do not thrive. The total number in the district is extremely small. The country ponies are, if anything, even more miserable specimens than the cattle. Few of them are as much as twelve hands in height, and they possess neither pace, stamina, or endurance. They have not in fact a single redeeming feature, and it is a matter for congratulation that their numbers are so small. European residents in Sylhet are compelled to obtain all their horse flesh from Calcutta.

Floods.

Floods are one of the most serious difficulties with which agriculture is confronted, but they are of so regular and general a character that they are treated by the husbandman as part of the established course of nature. In the chapter on the history of the district reference has been already made to the destructive inundations at the end of the eighteenth century, to the attempts made to control these deluges by a system of embankments, and to the conclusion to which

the authorities were ultimately forced that they were engaged upon an absolutely hopeless enterprise. During the rains the north and west of Sunamganj is over-flowed by the waters of the various rivers that come down from the hills such as the Panatirtha, Maheskhali, Someshwari, Painda, Kangsa, Surma, Kalni, Khasimara, Mugai and Piyain. The north and west of Habiganj are submerged by the floods of the Dhaleswari, Sutang, Balabhadra, and Khowai; and in Jaintia, the Lain, Goyain, Peein, Lubha and other streams inundate the low lying tracts. This is, however, only the fringe of marshy country which on three sides surrounds the higher and more fertile portions of the district. Though it must be admitted that floods occasionally do damage, it is obvious that the harm done in the more elevated tracts cannot be very serious or the district would not be able to support over 2,000,000 persons in a condition of comparative comfort. During the past twenty years, the floods of 1883, 1885, 1893, and 1897 have been unusually high, but no measures of relief were necessary.

Tea.

Reference must now be made to one of the most important crops of the district, a crop which has attracted a considerable number of Europeans* to Sylhet, and has led to a large local expenditure of British capital. Tea is said to have been first discovered growing wild in the Assam Valley in 1823, and the first garden was opened, in Lakhimpur, in 1835. In 1855, wild tea was discovered in the Surma Valley, and the first garden was opened in Sylhet at

* The number of European planters in 1903 was: North Sylhet 15, Habiganj 26, South Sylhet 102, and Karimganj 51.

Malnichara in 1857. The progress of the industry was at first extremely slow, and the merits of Sylhet as a tea producing district were not recognised till comparatively late. The earliest figures available are those for 1868. In that year the area under tea cultivation was returned at 2,050 acres, and the outturn at 251,000 lbs. Even in 1884 the outturn was only 5,561,000 lbs, which was less than half the crop obtained in Cachar, Sibsagar, or Lakhimpur. A great change then took place, and both the area under cultivation and the outturn increased with remarkable rapidity. By 1893 the yield amounted to 20,627,000 lbs. which nearly equalled that of Sibsagar, the largest tea producing district in Assam. The upward tendency was maintained, and in 1900, there were 71,490 acres under plant, which yielded 35,042,000 lbs. of manufactured tea, which was more than 4,000,000 lbs. in excess of that produced in any other district in the Province.

Labourers employed.

Statistics for later years will be found in Table VI. which shows the number of gardens in each subdivision, the area under tea, the outturn, and the labour force. Such local labour as is available for employment is generally unsatisfactory, and the coolies required for working the plantations have to be brought from other parts of India. In the ten years ending with 1890, the total number so imported was 71,950, and during the next decade it was nearly doubled and amounted to 141,650. The largest numbers imported in any given year were 26,450 in 1895 and 27,080 in 1896.

The following statement shows the locality from which the majority of these persons come. The climate of Sylhet is not unsuited to the natives of the United Provinces and planters are thus enabled to work their gardens with labourers who in Assam would quickly sicken and die. The coolies who are most difficult to procure, and who cannot, as a rule, be imported to Assam for less than a hundred rupees a head, are Sonthals and other jungly tribes from the Chota Nagpur plateau. Of them there are comparatively few, and one of the most important assets in the planter's favour in Sylhet is the fact that he can obtain his own labour at fairly moderate rates.

1901.	Number	Percentage.
Total	144,876	...
Chota Nagpur...	22,745	16
Other parts of Bengal	22,067	15
United Provinces	41,169	28
Central Provinces	12,681	9
Madras	10,079	7

The gross cost of importation is, however, large and few people would be willing to expend considerable sums of money in bringing up coolies to the district, without some guarantee that for a time, at any rate, they would be able to retain their services. This guarantee is afforded by Act XIII of 1859, which empowers a magistrate to order a man who has taken an advance of money on

account of work to be done by him, to complete his contract, and to punish him with imprisonment if he declines to carry out this order. The number of cases in which the coolie is actually confined is, however, small, and in 1903 only 13 deserters were punished with imprisonment, or less than one in every 10,000 of the labour force. It has already been remarked that the gardens of Sylhet are fairly healthy on the whole. Unfortunately the mortality is occasionally high on newly opened gardens, and amongst batches of new coolies, who often come up in a poor state of health, especially in times of famine, which is the very time when recruiting is most brisk. The average mortality amongst adult labourers in the ten years 1880-89 was 35 per mille, and in the next decade the rate was 37. During the p st three years, (1900-03) it has not exceeded 25 per mille. 1897 was the most unhealthy year, with a deatht rate of 51 per mille. But this, after all, was no higher than the recorded mortality for the Province as a whole, which, thanks to the extremely defective agency for registration, was undoubtedly much below the mortality which actually occurred.

Soil required.

A friable red loam is thet soil that proves most suitable for tea. The plant requires a well distributed and heavy rainfall, but anything in the shape of water-logging is most prejudicial to its growth, ando gardens should only be planted out on land which can be well drained. Land which in its natural state is covered with tree forest, is usually considered the mostq suitable, as the absence of timber generally shows either that the place is liable to flood, or that the soil is sandy, or thate the rainfall is

deficient, but excellent results have been obtained in Sylhet from reclaimed marsh land. Most of these *bil* gardens are situated in the Langai valley, but they are also found in the valleys of the Juri or Sonai. Care is taken to select a piece of marsh land which is above flood level, and it is then thoroughly drained. This is a very expensive operation, and the mere drainage of a *bil* garden costs nearly as much as the complete opening out of an estate on higher land. The main drain is from 12 to 15 feet deep and as many wide, and every twelve yards it is joined by lateral drains. The yield is, however, unusually large, and these gardens have proved to be a very good investment in spite of the heavy initial expenditure entailed. The first *bil* garden was opened at Adamtila in 1878, and the largest gardens of this kind in Sylhet are Siphinjuri, Patni, Piplagul, Champabari, Tilbura, Chandkhira, Langai, and Sonakhira, all of which are situated in the Langai valley.

Varieties of Plant.

Four distinct varieties of wild tea are recognised—Assam indigenous, which has a leaf from 6 to $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length by $2\frac{3}{8}$ to $2\frac{7}{8}$ inches in width, Manipur or Burma indigenous with a larger, darker, and coarser leaf than the preceding variety, Lushai or Cachar indigenous, whose mature leaf is from 12 to 14 inches long, and from 6 to $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, and the Naga indigenous which has a long and narrow leaf. In addition to these four varieties there is the China plant, and different kinds of hybrids. The China tea is a squat and bushy shrub with small leaves, which gives a lower yield per acre than the other kinds. It is many years since China seed was planted out in new clearances,

and considerable areas covered by this plant have been abandoned. In its natural state the indigenous plant attains to the dimensions of a tree, varying from 20 to 50 feet in height, though its girth seldom exceeds two feet. It has a vigorous growth and yields a large outturn of fine flavoured tea, but is delicate when young. Of the hybrid variety there are many qualities, ranging from nearly pure indigenous to nearly pure China. A plant with a very small admixture of China is usually preferred, as this imparts the hardiness the want of which is the one defect in the indigenous variety. The best seed grown in Sylhet is obtained from the Lakatura garden. The price varies largely in accordance with the demand, and, of recent years, has ranged from Rs. 150 a maund prior to 1898 to Rs. 15 to 35 a maund in 1903.

System of Cultivation.

The seed is planted in nursery beds in December and January, and kept under shade till the young plants are three or four inches above the ground. Transplanting goes on between April and July, whenever there is rain, the plants being usually placed from four to five feet apart. During the first two years of their life little more is required than to keep the plantation clear of weeds. By this time the plants are from two to four feet high, and at the end of the rains they are pruned down to fifteen inches or a foot, to encourage lateral growth. In the third year the plant can be lightly plucked over but the yield of leaf is small. Pruning is continued every year. Only about two inches are left of the wood formed since the previous pruning and

any unhealthy or stunted branches are removed. During the rains, the garden is hoed over several times, in order to render the soil permeable both to rain water and the roots of the bush. At the end of the rains the ground is hoed up to the depth of 8 or 9 inches. The object of this is to protect the land from drought as the hoed up soil prevents the evaporation of water from the lower strata. It, also, adds to the fertility of the land by exposing it to air, light, and changes of temperature. Manure has hitherto been little used. Oil cake and cowdung are, however, sometimes spread about the plants, and exhausted land is not unfrequently top dressed with rich soil from a neighbouring marsh. The cost of these operations is considerable and they are not invariably successful from the pecuniary point of view. *Matikalai* (*phaseolus mungo radiatus*) is sometimes sown among the bushes and afterwards hoed in as a green manure.

Plucking begins in April and is continued till the beginning of December. The bud and the two top leaves are taken from each shoot, but fresh leaves soon appear, and in about five weeks time the shoot is ready to be plucked again. This throwing out of new leaves is termed a flush, and there are usually six or seven full flushes in a season, though each bush is picked over every ten days or so, as the twigs develop at different times. The plucking is usually done by women and children, while the men are engaged in hoeing up the ground around the plants.

The plant is liable to be attacked by a large number of pests, the best known being the tea mosquito or blight, the green fly, and the red spider. A full account

of these pests will be found in "The pests and blights of the tea plant" by Watt and Mann, Calcutta, 1903.

System of Manufacture.

When the leaf has been taken to the factory, it is spread out in thin layers on trays and allowed to wither. In fine weather the process takes about 18 hours, but if it is cold and wet it may be 30 hours before the leaf is ready. When the leaf has been properly withered it is placed in the rolling machines. The object of rolling is to break up the cellular matter and liberate the juices, and to give a twist to the leaf. Rolling takes about 40 minutes, and after this the leaf is spread in a cool room for from 3 to 5 hours to ferment. It is then placed on trays in the firing machines, through which hot air is driven, until the last trace of moisture has been expelled, and the tea is crisp to the touch. The leaf is then passed through sieves of varying degrees of fineness, and the tea sorted into different grades. The best and most expensive quality is called broken orange pekoe and is made from the bud or tip, which contains all the good qualities of tea in a more concentrated form than any of the other leaves, is stronger, and has a more delicate flavour. The other grades, which are differentiated by the size of the mesh through which they pass, are orange pekoe, broken pekoe, pekoe, souchong, and fannings. After the tea has been sorted it is fired once more to remove any moisture it may have absorbed from the surrounding atmosphere, and is packed in lead lined boxes while it is still warm. Tea loses largely in weight during the process of manufacture, and about

four pounds of green leaf are required to produce one pound of the finished article.

Green Tea.

Of recent years an attempt has been made to introduce the manufacture of green tea in order to meet the demands of the American market. In 1902, the Indian Tea Association offered a bounty of 1½ annas on every pound of green tea manufactured. The following year this bounty was reduced by half, and over a million pounds of green tea were exported from Sylhet. The principal difference between the manufacture of green and black tea is that the former article is not fermented. As soon as the leaf comes in it is steamed in a drum for about half a minute, a process which turns it a bright green colour, and effectually stops all fermentation. Excess moisture is removed by a hydro-extractor or centrifugal machine, and it is then rolled, fired, and sorted into the following different grades, pinhead gunpowder, gunpowder, young hyson, hyson No. 1, hyson No. 2, twanky, and dust. The infused leaf should be of a bright green colour, and the liquor of a very pale yellow shade. Most of this tea is sent to North America, but a small quantity is sold in the midland counties of England.

Outturn and Prices.

The average yield per acre varies largely in different years and on different gardens, but may usually be taken as at about 500 lbs. per acre. Since 1897, the lowest average was 412 lbs. in 1898, the highest 536 lbs. in the following year. Prices, of recent years, have been on the downward grade. In 1868, the Commissioners appointed to enquire

into the state and prospects of tea cultivation in Assam, Cachar, and Sylhet, reported that tea must fetch at lease two shillings a pound if the industry was to be a profitable one. In 1887, the first year for which returns are available, Surma Valley teas fetched about As. 8 per lb. The price fluctuates considerably and in 1894 was as high as 8 annas 8 pie. It then began to fall, and in 1898 was only 5 annas, while in 1902, it was 4 annas 3 pie; but in the following year it was nearly an anna higher. The fall in price has, however, been accompanied by a great decrease in the cost of production, which is largely due, amongst other causes, to the increase in the average output. In 1872, the highest yield from any garden was 315 lbs per acre—thirty years later it was probably four times as large. Most of the tea gardens are situated on the low hills in the south of the Habiganj, South Sylhet, and Karimganj subdivisions. In South Sylhet they reach almost up to the Kusiyara river, some distance to the north of Maulavi Bazar. In Appendix A will be found a table showing for each tea garden in the district, its gross area and the area under plant, the labour force, the names of the owners, and the distance from the garden to the nearest subdivisional head-quarters station.

Forests.

In the Fifth Report submitted to Parliament in 1812 A. D. by the Select Committee on the affairs of the East India Company it is said that Sylhet is chiefly productive in rice and cotton, but is of more importance from the natural growth of timber which is largely used for boat building. It is probable that, even at that time, Sylhet timber, like

Sylhet lime, was actually brought from places which were beyond the borders of the district, and, at the present day, though considerable quantities of forest produce pass from Sylhet into Bengal, most of it was grown in Cachar, Manipur and the Lushai and Tippera Hills.

Area of reserves and unclassed state forests.

The Sylhet state forests fall into two main classes, the reserved forests, which cover an area of 103 square miles, and the unclassed state forests, which, in 1902-03, covered an area of 179 square miles. Unclassed state forest is neither more nor less than 'waste land at the disposal of Government,' and does not of necessity possess the very smallest silvan characteristics. It may be a large swamp which goes under water in the rains and is totally destitute of trees, it may be a small piece of arable land, which has been resigned by its former owner and has not yet been settled with any other person, or it may be, as its name suggests actual tree forest. In the case of Sylhet, the proportion of unclassed state forest which falls in the latter category is probably not large. Most of this unsettled Government waste is situated in the Jaintia Parganas, or in swamps and hills in the south of the district.

System of management.

The management of the Government forests is generally entrusted to an Extra Assistant Conservator who has a sanctioned staff of 4 deputy rangers, 3 foresters, 17 head guards and 42 forest guards. Settlement holders in the Jaintia and Pratapgarh Parganas and the Langai-

Singla valleys are allowed to remove from unclassed state forests forest produce, other than reserved trees, free of charge, provided that it is for their own consumption and not for sale. Permits are also issued to traders for timber and other forest produce. On this a royalty is paid, the rates charged varying from one to four annas for every cubic foot of timber in the rough, or for every hundred bamboos. If the timber is situated in a reserve, the tree must not be felled till it has been marked by a forest officer deputed for the purpose. Timber or other forest produce is almost invariably removed by water, and ultimately reaches one or other of the revenue stations of the district.* Here it is measured up and assessed to royalty, which may be sent by postal order to the nearest treasury. On receipt of the treasury voucher, a pass is issued, and the owner is allowed to remove his property. Forest produce coming from private land is also stopped at these stations, but, on the production of a certificate of origin signed by the owner or his agent, a pass is issued for its removal.

Trees and trade in forest produce.

The most valuable timber trees found in the district, which are largely used in the construction of houses and boats, are jarul or ajhar (*lagerstrœmia reginæ*), sam (*artocarpus chaplasha*), gundroi (*cinnamomum glanduliferum*), kurta

* The following are the revenue stations in Sylhet :—

1.	Patharkandi on the river Langai.			7.	Chhatak on the river Surma.		
2.	Langai	„ „	„	8.	Sunamganj	„ „	„
3.	Silua	„ „	Juri.	9.	Laurergar	„ „	Panatirtha or Jadukata.
4.	Maulavi Bazar	„ „	Manu.				
5.	Manumukh	„ „	Kusiyara.	10.	Muchikandi	„ „	Khowai.
6.	Kanairghat	„ „	Surma.	11.	Dinarpur	„ „	Gopla.

(*isonandra polyantha*), rata (*dysoxylum binectariferum*) and poma (*cedrela toona*). Simul (*bombax malabaricum*), am (*magnifera*), kadam (*anthocephalus cadamba*) and harish (*albizzia stipulata*) are converted into tea boxes. The trees are felled, sawn into logs about fifteen feet in length, and dragged by elephants to the nearest stream, down which they are floated to their destination. The principal centres of the timber trade are Patharkandi in the Langai valley, Karimganj, Sylhet, Moulavi Bazar, Habiganj, Bhanga, Ajmiriganj and Lakhai. The industry is not confined to any particular section of the community, but in North Sylhet most of the saw pits are the property of Muhammadans. From the figures given in Table VIII it will be seen that nearly all the fuel, and fully half the timber extracted from Government forests in Sylhet, is obtained from unclassed state forest. Minor products from which revenue is realized are bamboos, thatching grass, and grazing. Fees are levied on all animals grazed by professional herdsmen in the Hakaluki *haor*,* and the exclusive right to cut bamboos and thatching grass in the more inaccessible portions of the district is put up to auction.

Reserved Forests.

The Langai forest, which is situated at the southern end of the Langai valley, between the Pratapgarh and Pathariya hills, was originally constituted a reserve by notification No. 57, dated 17th September 1886. A portion of it was subsequently disforested, and revised boundaries, which include an area of some 80 square miles, were gazetted in notification No.

* The number affected is not very large. In 1902-03 fees were levied on 1,485 buffaloes, 1,146 cattle and 48 other animals.

3341 R., dated 13th September 1901. The greater part of this area consists of hilly country which slopes towards the river, interspersed with stretches of level land covered with high grass. The soil is a deep sandy loam which is rich in vegetable mould, and in addition to the trees already mentioned the following are found: Shundi (*mechelin sp.*), ping (*cynometra polyandra*), koroi (*albizzia procera*), karal (*dipterocarpus sp*), chatni (*alstonia scholaris*) and sitarjat (*echinocarpus tiliaceus*). Timber can be extracted without much difficulty, and floated down the Langai to the Kusiyara, whence it can be distributed to every part of the district. The average annual receipts from this forest in the three years ending with 1902-03 were about Rs. 13,000. The Singla reserve adjoins the Langai on the east and resembles it in its general characteristics. It covers an area of 23 square miles, according to the boundaries laid down in Notification No. 3341 R., dated 13th September 1901. Timber felled in this reserve is floated down the Sonai, to the Kusiyara, but from Table VII it appears that the average annual receipts, since the forest was formed into a separate reserve, have only been about Rs. 1,200.

CHAPTER V.

INDUSTRIES.

Lime—Pottery—Brass and Bell-metal—Weaving—Boat building—Workers in wood—Carving and children's toys—Cane work—Other manufactures—Fishing—Lac.

Manufactures.

The following is a list of the manufactures of Sylhet apart from tea: Slaked lime, pottery, brass and bell-metal utensils, cotton and silk cloths, boats, wooden articles and palanquins, children's toys, chessmen, jewellery, shell bracelets and inlaid iron work, iron and stone work, fire-works, *hookhas* and *tikiyas*, mats, leaf umbrellas and fans, cane furniture, attar of agar, various kinds of oil, cane and bamboo baskets, cheese, *ghi*, and molasses.

Lime.

Lime is brought from the quarries in the Khasi Hills and is burnt on either side of the Surma river from Chhatak to some distance below Sunamganj. A full account of the history of the industry will be found in the Gazetteer of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. The process of manufacture is extremely simple. Big holes of the shape of an inverted cone and about ten feet deep are dug near the bank of the river. They are filled with stone which is piled up till the structure rises about five feet above the surface of the ground, and the upper portion is then covered with straw and plastered over with mud. A hole is left at the bottom facing the river, and a fire is built right underneath the centre of the pile of rock and

continuously fed with reeds for some twelve to fourteen days, till the stone is thoroughly calcined. A little water is then sprinkled over it and the lime is ready for the market. The importance of the industry may be judged from the fact that over two million maunds of lime and stone were exported from Sylhet in 1902-1903. The following figures give some idea of the cost of the different stages by which limestone cliffs in the Khasi Hills are converted into slaked lime at Calcutta.

The approximate charges for laying down 1,000 maunds of stone at Chhatak are—Quarrying Rs. 30; dynamite Rs. 2; trollying to river's bank Rs. 10; boating from Therria Ghat to Chhatak Rs. 50; and Government royalty Rs. 20.

One thousand maunds of stone at Chhatak fetch from Rs. 125 to Rs. 130, and the cost of burning is from Rs. 120 to Rs. 150. A Chhatak maund of stone weighs 102 lbs. and yields one *phera*, or about 92 lbs. of slaked lime. The cost of 1,000 nominal maunds of slaked lime at Chhatak is thus from Rs. 245 to Rs. 280, and the price is said to vary from Rs. 290 to Rs. 400. Freight to Calcutta is from Rs. 200 to Rs. 230 per 1,000 maunds.

Pottery.

Potters are either Hindus of the Kumar caste, or Muhammadans called Khuskis who are regarded with some contempt by the main body of their co-religionists. The earth used is generally a glutinous clay, which is well moistened with water and freed from all extraneous substances. If it is too stiff, some clean coarse sand is worked up with it,

and a well kneaded lump of the material is then placed on the wheel, which is fixed horizontally and made to rotate rapidly. As the wheel revolves the potter works the clay with his fingers and gives it the desired shape. The vessel is then sun-dried, placed in a mould, and beaten into final shape with a mallet, a piece of hard earth called *balia* being held the while against the inner surface. It is again sun-dried, the surface is polished, and it is ready for the kiln. The collection of the clay and firewood, the shaping of the utensils on the wheel, and the stacking of them in the kiln, form the men's portion of the work, while the final polishing is entrusted to the women, who sometimes mould small pots with their hands without employing the wheel. The instruments employed are the wheel (*chak*), which is about three feet in diameter and rotates on a piece of hard pointed wood fixed firmly in the ground, the mould (*athal*) a hollow basin about 16 inches long by 3½ inches deep, the mallet (*boila*) and the polisher (*chaki*). The principal articles manufactured are water jars (*kalash* or *kalsi*, *ghat* or *sarai*), cooking pots (*kachli*, *kurai* or *patil*), larger vessels such as *hari*, *matka*, or *jula*, smaller vessels such as *sara*, *kai*, and *kalki*, cups, plates, and lamps. The potters also make clay images of the various deities which are painted in bright colours and worshipped at the various festivals, and small models of elephants and other animals which are used as children's toys. This branch of their art is said to be distinctly lucrative. A few villages in Habiganj are famous for large, strong, earthen vessels which are used for storing molasses, and the cooking pots of Bengaduba in pargana Bejura, and of Lukra in pargana Richi are in some request. The profits

of the business are said to be small, and the local pottery is being gradually ousted by a superior quality of goods imported from Bengal, and by metal utensils which are coming extensively into use. Rough glazed earthen ware cups of European manufacture and plates and dishes of enamelled iron are also taking the place of the Sylhet pots and vessels.

Brass and bell-metal.

The brass and bell-metal industry is not of much importance. Its principal centres are at the district and sub-divisional head-quarters towns, and at Badarpur, Nandanpur, Madhabpur, Akhailkura and Srimangal, but only about a thousand persons are supported by this trade. Bell-metal utensils are cast in moulds, but brass vessels are made out of thin sheets of that metal which are beaten out and pieced together. The implements of the trade consist of anvils of different sizes (*nehai*, *thammua*, and *amti*), hammers, pincers and chisels. The furnace is simply a hollow in the floor of the hut and the bellows are made of goats' skin. When it is desired to join two sheets of brass together, nicks are cut in one edge, into which the other edge is fitted, and the two are then beaten flat. A rough paste made of borax and *pain*, a substance which consists of three parts of sheet brass with one part of solder, is then smeared over the join. The metal is heated, the *pain* melts, and the union is complete. The principal articles manufactured out of brass are small flattish bowls often used as drinking cups (*lota*, *bati*), jars for holding water (*kalsi*), basins (*dabar*, *tagar*, *tasla*), and spoons (*hata*). From bell-metal are made lime boxes (*chunati*), cooking vessels (*batlai*), and cymbals (*kartal*).

Weaving is not practised as a home industry in Sylhet as it is in the Assam Valley, and the great mass of the rural population are dressed in the cheap fabrics of Manchester and not in home made cloth. The Jugi caste is strongly represented, but few of them now touch the loom, and such clothing as is produced is for the most part woven by Manipuris. In 1891, there were only 6,768 persons in the Surma Valley entirely supported by the weaving of cotton cloth, as distinguished from those who combined that occupation with agriculture, and, in 1901, there were only 5,009 persons in Sylhet whose principal means of maintenance was the loom. The whole question of weaving in this Province has been dealt with at great length in a monograph on the Cotton Fabrics of Assam published at Calcutta by the Superintendent of Government Printing, 1897. The system followed in the Assam Valley is described on pages 30 to 51, and this is the system adopted by the Jugis on such occasions as they think fit to return to their traditional occupation, and occasionally also by the Manipuris. An alternative Manipuri process is described on pages 77 and 78. In the absence of elaborate plans and diagrams, descriptions of mechanical processes of this character are extremely difficult to follow, and those curious in the matter should refer to the monograph in question. Any one who really wishes to understand the way in which the work is done would, however, be well advised to study the subject in person and on the spot. The following is a brief description of the more important local products of the loom. The *than* or *gilap* is a large stout cloth made of white cotton thread, and

Weaving.

used in the cold weather as a warm wrap. The ordinary size is 9 feet by 4 feet 6 inches, but it is sometimes 18 feet and even 36 feet in length and is worn double. The price ranges from As. 8 to Rs. 3. Other articles turned out are *chadars* or wrappers, *dhotis* or waist cloths, handkerchiefs, and napkins. The *fanek* is a garment worn by Manipuri women, which is fastened under the arms above the bust, and reaches to a little below the knee. It is made of green or dark blue thread with red and yellow stripes, and is sometimes embroidered with flowers in cotton or silk. The price varies from Rs. 2-8 to Rs. 7. The *khesh* is a thick cloth either plain or striped, used as a coverlet for a bed, as a wrapper by men, and as a petticoat by women. *Kheshes* are generally from 5 feet to 9 feet in length by 3 feet to 6 feet in breadth, and cost from As. 8 to Rs. 3. The Manipuris also weave cheap mosquito curtains which are sold for from As. 8 to Rs. 1-4-0 a set. Imported cotton thread is generally used, but the fact that at the last census 2,383 persons in Sylhet were shown as dependent upon spinning for their maintenance, indicates that the cotton grown in the hills is not neglected. Nearly all of these spinners, it need hardly be said, were women.

Eri silk.

The eri silk worm is reared by Assamese immigrants who have settled at the foot of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, and by a few poor Namasudra widows, but the cloth produced is generally intended for home wear and very little comes to market. The worm (*attacus ricini*) derives its name from the eri or castor-oil plant (*ricinus communis*) on which it is usually fed. From 5 to 6 broods are usually

reared in the year, those which spin their cocoons in November, February, and May yielding most silk. When the female moths emerge they are tied to pieces of reed, and are visited by the males who are left at liberty. The eggs are hatched in the house and take from a week to 15 days to mature. As soon as the worms appear they are placed on a tray, which is suspended in a place of safety, and fed on the leaves of the castor oil plant. When fully grown, they are about 3½ inches long and of a dirty white or green colour. After the final moulting, the worms are transferred from the tray to forked twigs suspended across a piece of reed, and, when they are ready to spin, are placed on a bundle of dried plantain leaves or withered branches which are hung from the roof of the hut. The matrix of the cocoon is very gummy, and the silk, which is of a dirty white colour, has to be spun, not reeled off. Before this is done the cocoons are softened by boiling them in water and a solution of alkali. Empty cocoons yield about three-quarters of their weight in thread.

Boat Building.

Boat building has always been an important industry in Sylhet. Mr. Lindsay, who was Collector there in 1780, built one ship of 400 tons burden, which drew 17 feet of water when fully loaded ; and experienced considerable difficulty in navigating her to the sea. He also built a fleet of 20 ships, and sent them to Madras loaded with rice, on the occasion of a scarcity in that Presidency. The following account of boat building in Sylhet is taken from an account submitted by Mr. Luttman Johnson in his General Administration Report for 1880-81 : " The subdivision of Habiganj possesses at least two kinds of boats not

found elsewhere, the *Lakhai Palwar* and the *Khawai* boat. The *Khawai* boat is, however, only a flat-bottomed "*saranga*," the simplest development of the dug-out canoe. The bed of the *saranga* is simply a curved dug-out, on which the sides of the boat are built up. The more elaborate boats are built on the lines of an imaginary keel, the two ends or "*Galais*" of which are propped up at the beginning, in the places they will occupy when the boat is finished. Great quantities of keels and half finished boats of *Jarul* (*lagerstrœmia reginæ*) wood are made at Habiganj for sale at Phandauk Bazar in the Tippera district, where there is a great mart for timber. The "*Barki*" boat of Panduah, which plies in the river from Chhatak to Therriaghat, at the foot of the Khási Hills, is also peculiar to the district." It is, however, nothing more than a flat bottomed canoe, of very shallow draught, which is used for transporting limestone over the rapids in the hills. The boats built in the Balaganj quarter of the district are more spacious, as they are much wider than the Habiganj boats, though not so long.

Workers in wood.

The following account of the carpentry of Sylhet is taken from the same source : "Wood sawing is carried on in many parts of the district, specially at Bhanga, a place on the eastern border of the district, at the town of Sylhet, and at Habiganj. The sawyers generally come from the Habiganj subdivision. From the wood thus prepared, beams, rafts, and posts of houses are made, as well as platforms, bedsteads, benches, stools, wardrobes, desks, almirahs, chairs, tables, &c. Some of these are made after Calcutta

models. The wages of a carpenter vary from As. 8 to As. 12 a day. The carpenters also make agricultural implements, namely, the clodcrusher, the plough, and the yoke. The Manipuris make the wooden shoes, which are so universally worn by natives, and the *baulas* or pegs, which pass between the great toe and the toe next to it to prevent the sandal from slipping off the foot. These shoes and pegs are exported to some extent. Dhakadakshin, a pargana in the east of the district, is famous for the wooden plates, *khanchas* or *barkoses*, and vessels, *charis* or *tagaris*, made there." Palanquins are made at Lashkarpur, Rajnagar, Langla, and Chapghat.

Carving and children's toys.

The best carpenters are Manipuris, and they often enrich the boxes and bedsteads they turn out with a little carving. Carving in ivory used also at one time to be a speciality of Sylhet town, but the art has unfortunately become extinct. Excellent children's toys are made from common wood. A wooden spindle, called *dokan*, is supported on two uprights, and is encircled by a piece of leather whose two ends are alternately pulled and relaxed by one of the carpenters, so that the spindle rotates with great rapidity. A rough hewn piece of wood is inserted in the hole at one end of the spindle, and the second man applies his gouge or chisel, which is supported on a rest called *pholi*. As the wood revolves he deftly and quickly fashions a peg, bowl, cup, top, or similar toy, and when the article is shaped applies the colour. This is imported from Dacca or Calcutta, the colouring matter being mixed with resin or lac, and the whole being of the consistency of a stiff putty. It

is applied in bands as the toy revolves on the spindle, and polished with a dry leaf. This colour does not come off when moistened, a property which is most useful in the case of children's toys. The best kind of paint costs Rs. 6 per seer, but a cheaper and much inferior quality can be obtained for Rs. 3. Chisels and gouges which are made locally cost from As. 10 to Re. 1. The price of a set of 25 toys is Rs. 1-4, and the makers are able to live in quite as good a style as that of the ordinary cultivator.

Cane work.

The cane and bamboo furniture of Sylhet is cheap and of a good quality, a serviceable chair costing as little as As. 6. Really good cane baskets are also to be obtained in the bazar, and the leaf umbrellas of Sylhet are quite a speciality. They are made of what is known as *chatta patti* (*licuala peltata*) on a frame work of bamboo, but, though they only cost about three annas each, they are being ousted by the imported article which is more convenient, in that it can be closed, and lasts much longer. Mats are of several kinds, the best quality being the famous *sitalpati*, which is made from the *murta* reed (*maranta dichotoma*), and is valued for its coolness and smooth texture. The finest quality of *sitalpati* is manufactured in pargana Chaualis and commands a fancy price. The *neuli* mats, which are made of split bamboo, are almost as fine as a coarse *sitalpati*, and last a good deal longer. The best varieties of this mat are manufactured in pargana Chapghat, but bamboo mats are usually made of a much coarser quality. Mats are also made from *nal* (*phragmites roxburghii*), a high reed

which grows in marshy country ; the fine kinds, which are called *chatis* or *maluas*, are used to sit or sleep on, the coarser varieties, known as *dhara*, *katia* or *chas*, are used for partition walls in houses, and are sometimes laid upon the cow shed floor. There is a considerable export trade in mats, and nearly 140,000 maunds weight of these useful articles are said to have been sent out of the district in 1902-03.

Other manufactures.

Tikiyas are made of powdered charcoal and cowdung by poor widows and are used in *hookah* smoking. Short wooden *hookah* stems are manufactured in Sylhet, and so also is the flexible variety which is adorned with silver thread. *Sola* pith is made up into artificial flowers, ornaments, and crowns, and the red powder, *abir* or *fagua*, which is used at the Doljatra festival, is prepared in pargana Taraf. Oil is expressed from mustard, linseed, sesamum or *til*, radish, and the castor oil plant. Linseed oil is used to mix with paint, and *til* is generally taken medicinally. Radish when intended to be used for oil is sown very thickly, there is hardlly any root, and the oil is expressed from the seed. It resembles mustard oil with which it is always mixed. Castor oil is used as food and also as a medicine for the itch. Oil is also extracted from the coal near the bed of the Panatirtha in the Sunamganj subdivision and is used as a remedy for skin diseases. *Patas* or stone pestles, and slabs used for pounding curry are made in Jaintia, and *daos* inlaid with gold at Rajnagar in the South Sylhet subdivision. *Ghi* and cheese are manufactured in Sunamganj and Nabiganj. Gold and silver ware is

manufactured, but the articles produced have no conspicuous merit. Many of the goldsmiths are Manipuris, but there are a certain number of Sylhettis, up-country men, and natives of Dacca, the last named being the most expert of all. There is one saw mill in the district at Bhanga Bazar, a station intermediate between Karimganj and Badarpur. In 1903, this mill gave employment to some 50 persons.

The fishing industry.

The fishing industry is of considerable importance in Sylhet and is a source of no little revenue to Government. In 1902-03 the total receipts under this head amounted to Rs. 66,900, and were distributed as follows: Sunamganj Rs. 5,500; North Sylhet Rs. 26,600; Karimganj Rs. 20,100; South Sylhet Rs. 2,100; and Habiganj Rs. 12,600. Though the receipts from Sunamganj are comparatively small, it is the most important centre of the industry, as there are valuable fisheries in the permanently settled estates. The Subdivisional Officer estimates that as much as 500,000 maunds of dried fish are exported annually from this portion of the district. The fish are cut open, the viscera removed, and the flesh exposed to the sun on bamboo platforms. When dry fish oil is poured over them, and they are buried near the homestead till the time has come for despatching them to market. There is also a large trade in live fish, which, according to the Subdivisional Officer, amounts to some 100,000 maunds. They are carried to their destination in boats, the bottoms of which are filled with water which has to be changed every twelve hours. Fish oil, which is used as an illuminant in lamps,

is obtained by frying the viscera, and soaking the head and flesh in water, when the oil rises to the surface. There is not much export trade in fish from the other subdivisions except from the Son *bil* near Karimganj, whence fish is exported to Hailakandi; and from the Hakaluki *haor*, whence it is sent by rail to the North Cachar Hills. The castes who are engaged in the industry are the Mahimals, Namasudras or Chandals, Dom Patnis, Kaibarttas and Bhuinmalis. Members of the higher castes catch fish for their own consumption but not for sale.

System of management.

Public fisheries are sold at auction to a middleman who makes the actual fishermen pay, either a fixed sum for each fishing house or village, or, more generally, a fixed sum for every net or trap employed. Typical rates are Rs. 30 for each *uthar jal*, Rs. 6 for a *jhaki* or *loya jal*, Rs. 4 to Rs. 6 for a *kheo jal*, Re. 1 for a *pelain*, and As. 4 for a *polo*, *hagra*, or other bamboo trap. In the Hakaluki *haor* Government levies a certain charge for each net or basket used, but in the channels leading to this and other *haors* there are regular fixed fisheries called *kheos*, which are openings cut in the jungle at right angles to the stream, in which a stake net can be placed. In the Jaintia Parganas many of the Government fisheries put up to auction are *bils* or swamps; elsewhere they are generally sections of the numerous rivers with which the country is intersected. The most valuable fishery is the Hakaluki *haor* which brings in a revenue to Government of from ten to eleven thousand rupees a year. In Habiganj fishing rights in 5½ miles of the Kalni river, from

the Bibisana river to the Kusiyara, fetch as much as Rs. 3,500 per annum, while a section of the Bibisana, 2¼ miles in length, was sold for Rs. 1,700. The Chatla *bil* in Karimganj fetches about Rs. 1,000. Most of the Government fishery revenue in North Sylhet is derived from the Jaintia Parganas. The best eating fish are hilsa (*clupea ilisha*), roe (*labeo rohita*), butchua (*eutropichthys vacha*), pufta (*callichrous bimaculatus*), magur (*clarias magur*), kai (*anabas scandens*), katal (*catla buchanani*) and chital, soul and prawns.

Nets used.

The following are the nets most commonly in use:

Bhar Jal.—Cost Rs. 16. A square net each side of which is about 24 feet in length. The two corners at one end are fastened a little above the water to two posts driven into the bed of the fishery 24 feet apart. The other end, to which ropes are attached, is allowed to sink in the water and is then drawn up with any fish that may have chanced to be swimming over the net at the time.

Dal Jal.—Cost Rs. 80 to Rs. 100. A stake net which is used to enclose a piece of water to which the fishes have been attracted by artificial cover formed from the boughs of trees.

Galfa or Ghona or Ber.—Cost Rs. 30 to Rs. 40. A net about 100 feet long and 10 feet deep which is allowed to float in a vertical position down stream, the top edge being buoyed by hollow bamboos. The fish, which swim faster than the net is floating, are caught in the meshes as they try to force their way through.

Ghatghati Jal.—Cost Rs. 10. This net is used by two men, each of whom takes one of the top corners in his left hand and ties the corresponding lower corner to his left foot. They walk out into the fishery till the net is in the form of a semi-circle, while their friends beat the water in the neighbourhood to drive the fish into the space enclosed. The men then meet and the fish are unable to escape.

Hefa Jal.—Cost Rs. 3 to Rs. 5. A triangle of bamboos filled with netting and fitted with a handle. It is used much as a shrimping net. The *pelain* is a smaller variety of this net and costs Re. 1. The *heka jal* is a net of the same kind used in rivers, and the *jhinti jal* one which is also used in *bils*.

Hera.—Cost Rs. 2 or Rs. 3. A rope which is used to catch the *ghagal* fish which always remains close to the bottom of the river or *bil*. The rope is dragged along the bottom, and the fish, when it feels it, retires before it and thus is guided towards the bank.

Hura Jal.—Cost Rs. 6 to Rs. 10. A long net, one end of which is tied to a post in a *bil* and the other held by the fisherman. He takes it out to its utmost limit and encloses a piece of water, catching all the fish which are inside.

Jhaki.—A flat circular piece of netting with a cord attached to the centre. The circumference is weighted with lead and the edge is turned up so as to form a series of deep pockets. The net is thrown so as to fall flat on the surface of the water, the weights pull the outer circle

down and together, and any fish inside are entangled in the pockets.

Khati.—A species of net or screen made of split bamboo and twine. A piece of water is enclosed by this net, which is then brought gradually towards the bank.

Kheo Jal or Shitkar.—Cost Rs. 4 to Rs. 8. A square net, the opposite corners of which are fastened together with pieces of bamboo. The net thus hangs like a sack from the pole to which it is attached, and is lowered into the water and raised again.

Maha Jal.—Cost Rs. 300 to Rs. 500. This net is something like the *galfa*, but instead of being allowed to drift down stream, it is arranged parallel to the bank and drawn towards it.

Sakubel—Cost Rs. 20. A triangular net the two sides of which are fastened to two bamboos joined at the apex. A little above their junction the bamboos are fastened to two stout posts on which they work on a pivot, and the base of the net is allowed to sink into the water. Pressure is then applied to the apex and the net and its contents are raised into the air. The *sakubel* is a large net the two sides being about 48 feet long and the base some 24 feet.

Sanga.—Cost Rs. 2. A net like a large pocket, about 24 feet across. The mouth of the pocket is fitted with two bamboos to which cords are attached, and the net is sunk in the stream facing the current. As soon as a fish enters the pocket the man slackens the cord attached to the upper edge of the mouth and pulls the lower edge

upwards so that the pocket is closed. Smaller nets of the same shape are the *loya jal* and the *ilish jal*. They are kept nearer the surface of the water than the *sanga*.

Uthar Jal—Cost Rs. 80 to 125. A large kind of *jhaki* which is too big to throw and is gradually laid out from two boats. This net is made in meshes of different sizes, the largest size mesh is called *reg*, the next size *saphaya*, while the smallest of all is known as *bachaoi*.

Fish are also caught in traps made of split bamboo, the doors of which open inwards so that the fish can shove them open from without, but cannot pull them open from within. They are of different shapes and are known as *kuin*, *bair*, or *dari*, *gui*, *paran* and *runga*. The *hagra* is a cone shaped wicker work basket open at one end only, and filled with brushwood in which small fish take shelter. It is sunk in the bed of the river and pulled up every twelve hours or so. The *chunga* is simply a hollow bamboo with holes in it, and is used in the same way as a *hagra*. Another device is the *dātia* which is a split bamboo, the two ends of which are fastened in an insect and tied together with a piece of twine. The fish swallows the insect and the twine, the two ends of the bamboo spring apart, and the fish is unable to close its mouth. Another method of catching fish is to spear them at night with a trident called *attar*, when they are dazzled by the glare of a torch in the front of the boat. The ordinary fish spear is called *kucha*, but when the head is fastened by a piece of cord to the shaft and remains in the body

of the fish, it is known as *jhagar*. Small fry are caught in the *polo*, a species of conical basket which the fisher dabs down before him as he walks along the *bil*. If he feels a fish inside he puts his hand in through the top and removes it. A long tube shaped basket used to catch the *kai* fish and worked on the same principle as the *polo* is called *jhupri*.

Lac.

About 25 years ago lac was produced in considerable quantities, but the industry is now in a very languishing condition. The insect is reared on the banian (*ficus indica*), but, for reasons which the cultivators have not yet succeeded in discovering, it no longer thrives upon this tree. The only places in which it is now produced are parganas Bhaterah, Baramchal, Langla and Kanaihati in the South Sylhet subdivision. Two crops are generally obtained in the year, the first being collected in May and June, the second in October and November. The first crop is largely used for seed.

CHAPTER VI.

ECONOMIC CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE—COMMUNICATIONS—TRADE—TOWNS AND LOCAL BOARDS.

Subtenancy—Rates of rent—Rent law—Subtenancy in Jaintia—Subletting in the *ilam* estates—Wages—Prices—Food and dress—Houses and furniture—Economic condition of people—Social restrictions—Railway—Navigable rivers—Boat traffic—Roads—Post and Telegraph—Trade—Towns—Local Boards.

Subtenancy.

Percentage of ordinary cultivating classes who were—

	1901.	1891.
Landholders ..	29	34
Tenants ..	70	60
Cultivators unspecified ..	1	6

There are no statistics of subtenancy available for the permanently settled portion of Sylhet, but the figures in the margin, which are taken from the Census Reports of 1891 and 1901, suggest that more than half of the total area of the district is sublet. The bulk of the estates created at the time of the permanent settlement were so small that there has been no room for the growth of the intermediate tenures which are so common in Bengal. Many of the actual settlement-holders drive the plough themselves, while the others let their land direct to the cultivator, and from the rent he pays them satisfy the Government demand.

Rate of rent.

In spite of the density of the population rents as a rule are fairly low, the ordinary rates charged ranging from As. 12 to Rs. 6 per acre; though good land in Habiganj and the most densely settled portions of the district will fetch as much as Rs. 12 or Rs. 15 per acre. The great majority of the landlords are small men, and have not the resources

or influence which would enable them to coerce refractory tenants ; and, though there is considerable pressure on the land, the difficulty of realizing the demand acts as an effectual check upon any tendency to rack renting.

The rent law.

The tenants are protected by Act VIII (B. C.) of 1869, which confers a right of occupancy upon any person who has held his land for a period of twelve years. The rent of such land is then not liable to enhancement, except on the ground that it is below the rate prevailing for similar land in the vicinity, that the value of the produce or the productive powers of the land have been increased otherwise than by the agency or at the expense of the raiyat, or that he holds a larger area than that for which he has hitherto been paying. The relations between landlord and tenant are said to be fairly satisfactory. The average number of suits annually instituted in Sylhet under the rent law during the four years ending with 1902 was 4,057, but the immense majority were for sums that did not exceed Rs. 50.

Subtenancy in Jaintia.

In the Jaintia Parganas, for which more accurate statistics are available, most of the cultivators hold direct from Government. At the settlement which took effect in 1896, it was found that out of a total settled area of 215,000 acres only a little more than 7 per cent. was held by subtenants, who formed a little less than 7 per cent. of the total population. These tenants fell into four classes. The majority paid rent in cash at rates which varied from Rs. 7-8 to As. 6 per acre of cultivated land. The

former rate is fairly high but from the small proportion of land sublet it seems fairly clear that the higher figure must be quite exceptional. Of the 8,104 sub-tenants only 268 paid rent in kind, the amount given to the landlord being usually less than one-third of the total produce. Other villagers, though the number is probably but small, hold their land either on a service tenure, or discharge their obligations partly in cash partly in labour.

Subletting in the Ilam Estates.

The proportion of land sublet in the Ilam estates, the bulk of which are found in the South Sylhet and Karimganj sub-divisions, is considerably higher. Out of a total area of 35,500 acres cultivated with ordinary crops nearly 42 per cent. is sublet, at rates varying from Rs. 8 to As. 6 per acre of rice land. Both of these are, however, exceptional rates, and the ordinary rent taken ranges from Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 per acre.

Wages.

The labouring classes are for the most part recruited from the ranks of the humbler Hindu castes such as the Dom-Patnis, Malos, Namasudras, Malis, and Jugis, and the poorer Muhammadans, but even members of the Halwa Das caste will consent to act as ploughmen. Four annas a day appears to be the usual labourer's wage. The minimum is reached in Sunamganj, where men can sometimes be hired for 2½ annas, but, in all parts of the district, reapers at harvest time, house-builders, and load carriers are occasionally paid as much as As. 8 a day. In parts of the district there is a prejudice against carrying loads or

palkis for hire, and men who will plough and reap or help to build a house, object to being employed as beasts of burthen, in spite of the fact that for centuries all goods taken by land have been carried in this manner. There is a still stronger prejudice against working on the roads, and most of the repair work has to be entrusted to Nuniya coolies from Bengal. Servants are paid from Rs. 2-8 to Rs. 4 a month with board and clothing, and if they feed themselves generally receive from Rs. 6 to Rs. 8 per mensem. Difficulty is said to be experienced in obtaining both servants and daily labourers, but, in comparison with the Assam Valley, Sylhet is well supplied with people ready and willing to work for hire. The proportion of the population of the district supported by general labour is, however, only 1 per cent. as compared with 7 per cent. in the neighbouring Province of Bengal.

Prices.

Rice is the staple food crop of the district, but the price at which it sells is largely affected by the condition of the harvest in Bengal. In the early years of British rule, the market was liable to violent fluctuations. This was not due to the want of proper means of communication, as the waterways of Sylhet and Eastern Bengal were as good then as they are at the present day. But the same facilities did not exist for a foreign export trade or for the despatch of grain up-country, and, when there was a bumper harvest in Sylhet, there was doubtless little or no demand for rice in those districts of Bengal which were accessible by water. The lowest price recorded was in 1786, when rice was selling at the rate of four and a half maunds

to the rupee, a price which hardly paid the cost of bringing it to market. Two years later it was up to Re. 1-8 a maund, but the normal price at the end of the eighteenth century seems to have been from 10 to 12 annas a maund for husked rice, and 5 to 6 annas for unhusked rice or paddy.

Rise in price during past 40 years' but progress very irregular.

The last forty years have witnessed a steady rise in price, the average amount of common rice obtainable at Sylhet for a rupee during each of the four decades between 1863 and 1902 being 25 seers, 21 seers, 16 seers, and 13 seers. But though the general tendency has been upwards, the chart, like that of the thermometer at Quetta, shows the most violent oscillations. In 1864, the market rate was 31 seers, but two years later it had risen to 13. In 1872, it was back to 38 seers, but in 1879 it had jumped up to 11, only to fall again three years later to 37 seers for the rupee. Only once since 1882 has the price been less than Rs. 2 a maund, and this was in 1888. The highest rate on record was in 1897 when only 9 seers could be purchased for the rupee; the lowest in the last fifteen years was 1899 when the same sum brought in nearly 20 seers.

Prices fairly uniform.

Communications on the whole are good, and the price of grain is fairly uniform throughout the district. The general tendency is for it to be highest in the South Sylhet and Karimganj subdivisions, where there is a considerable garden population, but this is merely a tendency and not an economic law, and rice is sometimes cheaper there

than in Habiganj or North Sylhet. In May 1899, the price was recorded at twenty-four bazars in different parts of the district. The average was Rs. 2-2-1 a maund, and fifteen out of the twenty-four bazars were within two annas of this mean. The two extremes were Rs. 2-10-0 per maund at Durlabchara Bazar in Karimganj, and Rs. 1-11-6 per maund at Munshi Bazar in South Sylhet. Salt does not vary much in price from year to year. In the ten years ending with 1880, 8·7 seers were on the average procurable for one rupee. From 1882 to 1887, salt was cheap and the average for that decade was 11 seers; but the average for the next ten years dropped to 10·1. In 1902, 10·4 seers were procurable for a rupee. Pulse also does not vary very much in price, and since 1900 has kept fairly steady at 13 seers for the rupee.

The price of rice, salt, and pulse in 1900 and subsequent years will be found in Table IX.

Food and dress.

The ordinary food of the villager is boiled rice, seasoned with spices or mixed with dal, or fish, or vegetable curry. Pigeons and ducks are occasionally eaten by the well-to-do, and in the west of the district rams are sometimes fattened for the table. The Muhammadans take fowl and, when they can afford it, beef. Cheese is sometimes eaten by the upper classes, and curds (*doi*) and fresh milk which has been coagulated by the addition of a little tamarind juice (*chhana*) are thought a dainty dish. Sweetmeats are made of flour or powdered rice mixed with *ghi* or oil, and sugar. Tea is comparatively seldom taken.

The clothing of an ordinary villager consists of a *dhoti* or waistcloth which costs 12 annas, and of which he will probably use four in the year, and two sheets which cost a rupee each. He also sometimes wears a small cotton coat which costs about 12 annas. A winter wrap costs Rs. 4 and lasts about two years, so that a man expends some seven or eight rupees each year upon his wardrobe. A woman wears a single garment—the *sari*, a long piece of cloth which is wrapped round the waist to form a petticoat and then thrown over the bust. It costs about 12 annas, and three or four are wanted every year. Amongst the upper classes chemises and bodices are coming into use, but the wife of a clerk can still dress on about eight rupees a year.

Houses and furniture.

The cottage of the ordinary cultivator is built on a mud plinth, and the floor, though cool, is damp. The roof is of thatch, the walls of reeds plastered with mud, or of split bamboo, the frame-work of the house of bamboo. There are no windows, and the interior of the hut, which in itself is small enough, is rendered additionally dark and stuffy by partition walls. The houses of the middle classes differ in quantity and quality but not in kind from those of the ordinary villager. While a poor peasant will content himself with a single hut his wealthier landlord will have five or six. They are larger and better built, timber posts are sometimes used in place of bamboo, and corrugated iron instead of thatch, but the principle remains the same. Masonry houses are extremely rare. The furniture of the villager consists of a wooden bed, a stool or two, and, if the man is fairly well-to-do, of

some wooden boxes and perhaps a chair. For bedding he has a dirty quilt made of old clothes, and his wardrobe is not distinguished either for the abundance or the excellence of his garments. Rough earthenware crockery of European manufacture and plates and dishes of enamelled metal are in common use. The poorer people sleep on a mat on the floor, but there are few houses in which a mosquito curtain is not to be found. Of actual poverty there is very little. The clothing of the cultivators though simple is all that is required at most seasons of the year, and there are probably few natives of the district who ever go in want of food. For the insanitary character of their homesteads the occupants are themselves chiefly to blame, and though there are few signs of wealth there is an equal absence of any evidence of grinding poverty.

Economic condition of the people. Indebtedness and rate of interest.

The economic condition of the people is obviously a subject of much interest and importance, but it is one with regard to which it is extremely difficult to obtain information on which reliance can be placed. The peasant in Sylhet has no desire to minimise his obligations, or to pose as a prosperous and wealthy person, and the reports that are received largely reflect the personal idiosyncracies of the individuals consulted. Indebtedness is said to be extremely common. There are few areas in which less than one-fourth of the total population are said to be involved, and in the west of Habiganj, in the Baniyachung, Lakhai, and Madhabpur thanas, and in parts of Karimganj, practically all the people are described as being in debt. On the other hand

in Muchikandi, adjoining Madhabpur, the proportion is reported to be as low as 25 per cent. It is true that this locality is less exposed to flood than Madhabpur, but it seems unlikely that there should be so marked a variation in the condition of the people inhabiting contiguous thanas, and there can be little doubt that these estimates of indebtedness must be received with a considerable degree of caution. In view of the high rate of wages paid for manual labour and the small proportion of labourers in Sylhet, it is not easy to believe that there is really much of genuine poverty. The rate of interest ranges from 18 to 75 per cent., the lower rates being charged on loans of considerable sums. When paddy is borrowed, the debtor undertakes to return double the amount or half as much again after the next crop has been harvested ; and, as the loan is generally made for but a short period, the rate of interest is very high. Marriage, *sradh* ceremonies, litigation, and the purchase of cattle are the causes which generally drive the peasant to the money-lender.

Economic condition of Sunamganj somewhat unsatisfactory.

It must be admitted that in the north-western corner of the district the conditions are not altogether favourable. Almost the whole of the country goes under water in the rains, there are no tea gardens, and little demand for labour except in connection with the lime industry. The Superintendent of one of the largest zamindaries in Tahirpur describes the people of that quarter as being "the most miserable lot of wretches on God's earth." On this the native Magistrate remarks, that had this gentleman, who is a native of the extremely

prosperous district of Backerganj, been acquainted with the condition of the peasantry in parts of Madras, Bihar or the Central Provinces, or, indeed, it may be added, in many parts of the world outside India, he would probably have couched his opinion in more moderate terms. The floods are so high in this portion of the district that the majority of the people depend on one rice crop, the *boro*, which is reaped before they rise. When the country is submerged a large portion of their time is devoted to the collection of fodder for their cattle which sometimes has to be brought from a considerable distance; but, apart from this, they have little or nothing to do for a great portion of the year, and there can hardly be much prosperity where there is very little work.

The officer in charge of the Sunamganj police station states that it is unsafe to conclude that, because the lower orders decline to undertake menial work, they are necessarily well off. He draws a somewhat gloomy picture of their condition and describes them as " in need of almost all the necessaries of life, ill-fed, ill-clothed, and badly housed. They cannot stand against a single drought or failure of crop, and cannot undertake any work requiring even a small outlay, without applying for a loan. Yet their habitual laziness and race pride precludes them from doing work by which the people of other parts are raising their status before their eyes. They practically have no margin to enable them to struggle with success against even one season of scarcity, can perform no marriage or *sradh* without a loan, and cannot even purchase a pair of bullocks without going

to the usurer." This picture also would seem to be painted in too gloomy colours. Deficiency of food is practically unknown, their clothing though poor is not unsuited to the climate, and their dietary, though unattractive to the European palate, is what they apparently prefer.

The rest of the district more prosperous.

In the Fenchuganj thana, it is said that the standard of comfort is higher than it was. Metal utensils have taken the place of earthenware, gold and silver ornaments are worn in place of lac and brass, carpet bags have come into use, and the leaf umbrella has been displaced by the product of the European factory. In South Sylhet and Karimganj, the great majority of the villagers are said to be in debt, but it is difficult to believe that the condition of the people is really quite as unsatisfactory as is alleged.

Evidence of settlement officers.

Little light is thrown on this important subject by the settlement reports. With regard to indebtedness in the Jaintia Parganas the Settlement Officer quotes Babu Prakash Chandra Datta who writes as follows :—

"The tales of indebtedness and living from hand to mouth in the statements recorded are common, but in most cases these are false and exaggerated, as strict enquiries have elicited, and are due to the peculiar fondness of Jaintia people to abstain as much they can from giving accurate information on matters in which they are interested. Of course, instances of real indebtedness are not wanting, as can be naturally expected, but the loans are generally contracted for marriages, religious ceremonies, for litigation, and rarely to buy cattle and to pay revenue. The majority of the real borrowers, it will be seen from the evidence recorded, are those who own larger areas

of land than are needed for their requirements or than they can cultivate, which they will not throw up, although obtaining no profit therefrom, because their forefathers held such an amount of land, and they will lose their prestige if they are to abandon it now ; or those who from a consideration of their social rank think it derogatory to work for hire when in need."

At the last resettlement of Ilam lands the Settlement Officer collected information with regard to the indebtedness of certain villages in the neighbourhood of Patharkandi. Here out of 393 householders 208 owed on the average Rs. 100 each, while in another village there were 81 debtors who owed altogether nearly Rs. 14,000 between them. Patharkandi is, however, situated in one of the less prosperous portions of the district, and it is difficult to believe that indebtedness is quite so prevalent or so serious in every part of the district as these figures would suggest, though the general impression of the native officers consulted is that it is very common.

General condition fairly satisfactory, though in some respects the Sylhettis are less fortunate than the Assamese.

As compared with the parts of India that are liable to famine the people of Sylhet are undoubtedly well off. The rainfall never fails, and, though a heavy flood occasionally does damage, the harvest is usually abundant and secure. Their surplus produce is sold direct to traders from Bengal, who can penetrate in their boats into almost every corner of the district, and there is no middleman to absorb a large share of the producer's profit. The villagers generally take three meals a day of cooked rice, and fish can be obtained without difficulty at all seasons of the year. They decline to work on tea gardens or on the roads, and actual poverty seems to be extremely rare. In some

respects, however, they compare unfavourably with the Assamese of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. Their houses are better built, but owing partly to the scarcity of materials, partly to a dearth of land suitable for building sites, they have less room space per family than the Assamese. Silk, which is so common in Assam, is hardly ever worn by the cultivators in Sylhet, and such ornaments as they possess are in no way comparable to the costly lockets and ear-rings of Jorhat. The houses are generally crowded together in uncomfortable proximity, and in the flooded thanas on the west fruit trees and garden produce are unknown. In the central portion of the district bamboos are plentiful, and there may be a mango or jack fruit tree and a few plantains, but there are no dense groves of betel nut, and vegetables, tobacco, and such like crops are not generally grown. Further south and east, the garden land improves, and the areca palms of Karimganj must be a source of considerable profit to their owners. Several causes operate prejudicially against the villager. In parts of the district there is a certain amount of pressure upon the land, and the people would be more prosperous were it possible for them to extend the area under cultivation. In Assam, the womenfolk of the ordinary peasant do most of the transplanting of the paddy, and help in the harvesting of the rice, and in their leisure moments fish, or weave on the loom enough clothing to satisfy the family requirements. In Sylhet, the women are not allowed to go abroad, and weaving as a domestic industry is practically unknown. The peasant's clothes have to be purchased with hard cash and are not as warm or durable as those worn in the valley of the Brahmaputra.

Social restrictions on trade and agriculture.

There are few restrictions on trade other than those imposed by the great law of caste. Dom-Patnis, Kaibarttas, Namasudras, Mirdhas, and Mahimals alone sell fish;* Sunris alone sell wine; Jugis alone weave cloth; Kumhars alone make pottery and so forth. In the Dharmapasha thana, in Sunamganj, Saturdays and Tuesdays are considered unlucky days for a first ploughing or for sowing seed, bamboos must not be cut on Sundays or cattle sold on Monday. On the other hand, further east in the Sunamganj thana, Tuesdays and Saturdays are said to be the best days for sowing *boro* seed, while Sundays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays are set aside for *aman*. Bamboos must not be cut on Sundays or Thursdays, houses built on Sundays, or money and paddy lent on the days of the new and full moon and the following days. In Baniyachung, people will not sell rice on Wednesdays and Sundays; and the former day is considered by Muhammadans in most parts of the district to be unfavourable for any undertaking. All over the district, the last day of the month and the day of the new moon are considered inauspicious. In Jaintia, the villagers will not begin ploughing on Sundays or sowing on Mondays, or cut bamboos on Thursdays and Sundays, but in the eastern portion of the district less regard seems to be paid to inauspicious days.

Means of communication: Railways.

There are four means by which goods are generally transported in Sylhet; the railway, the steamer, the country boat, and the

* In Madhabpur thana the Tiyars are the only caste who will sell anything less than whole fishes.

cooly. The cooly seems an anachronism as a beast of burthen, for the district has for the last twenty years been possessed of several hundred miles of excellent unmetalled roads, but, though the roads are there, the people have not yet realised the utility of carts. The Assam-Bengal Railway enters pargana Kasimnagar in the south-west corner of the district at mile 135 from Chittagong, and leaves it at Badarpur at mile 253. It skirts the Raghunandan hills, crosses the low ranges of Satgaon and Balisira, passes, like the river Manu, between the Rajkandi and Ita hills, and runs near the western base of the Langla and Patharija hills northwards to Karimganj. From this point it keeps fairly close to the left bank of the Kusiyara river till it reaches Badarpur, where the main line crosses the river, here known as the Barak, by a magnificent bridge, and turns north through the Assam Range into the Brahmaputra Valley. A branch line continues along the left bank of the river as far as Silchar. Work was begun on the railway in 1892 and the line was declared to be open for traffic as far as Silchar in 1899. The names of the stations going from west to east are Chandura at mile 137, Mantala at mile 142, Itakhola at mile 147, Shahji Bazar at mile 155, Saistaganj at mile 160, Daragaon at mile 166, Rasidpur at mile 168, Satgaon at mile 175, Srimangal at mile 179, Alinagar at mile 187, Shamshernagar at mile 191, Tilagoan at mile 197, Kulaura at mile 205, Juri at mile 212, Dakhinbhag at mile 216, Barlekha at mile 222, Latu at mile 229, Langai at mile 238, Karimganj at mile 239, Chargola at mile 243, Bhanga at mile 247, and Badarpur at mile 252. The railway passes near many of the tea gardens and carries

a considerable proportion of the tea crop of the district. The stations from which the largest quantities are booked are Srimangal, Shamshernagar, Langai, and Chargola.

Navigable rivers.

It has already been explained that the principal river of the district is the Barak, with its two main branches—the Surma and the Kusiyara—the latter of which is again subdivided into the Bibiyana or Kalni and the Barak. The Kusiyara arm is the route by which through traffic goes up the Surma Valley from Calcutta to Silchar, but the extent to which this river can be used depends upon the season of the year and the amount of water in the channel. During the rains big steamers come up from Calcutta and call at the following stations:—Ajmiriganj, Markhali, Enathganj, Sherpur, Manumukh for Maulavi Bazar, Balaganj, Fenchuganj, which is the company's headquarters in Sylhet, Nahair Ghat, Bairagi, Sheolamukh, Lakhi Bazar, Karimganj, Bhanga Bazar, and Badarpur. Small steamers run up the Surma from Markhali past Sunamganj and Chhatak to Sylhet town. In the cold weather, the big steamers go right up to Chhatak, but beyond that point there is not enough water in the Surma for steamer traffic during the dry season. Through traffic continues to go from Markhali to Silchar but small feeder steamers have to be employed. During the rains small steamers also run up the Manu to Chatlapur, up its tributary the Doloi to Kurma, and up the Langai from Karimganj to Langai Ghat.*

* These steamers are owned and managed by the India General Steam Navigation Co., whose managing agents are Messrs. Kilburn and Co., 4, Fairlie Place, Calcutta, and the Rivers Steam Navigation Co., whose agents are Messrs. McNeill and Co., 2-1, Clive Ghat Street, Calcutta.

In a district like Sylhet, where the fall is very slight and the current sluggish, it is inevitable that the rivers should silt up their beds. This process is apparently going on with greater rapidity in the Surma than the Kusiyara. In 1872, a large shoal formed a little below Sylhet and for the next ten years the attention of the local authorities was directed towards the question of improving the through water communications of the district. The Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Luttman-Johnson, made two trips up the Surma in a small steamer, and after a careful examination came to the conclusion that the river to open out was the Kusiyara and not the Surma. The cost of clearing the latter stream would have been very heavy, and it was not the direct route for the through traffic to Cachar. *

Boat traffic.

The greater part of the trade of the district is, however, carried not by steamer but by country boat. During the rains the *haors* and channels are filled with water, and these lumbering vessels with their light draught are able to leave the regular rivers and take shorter and more expeditious routes across the country. From Lakhai they go straight to Habiganj and then turn north-east through the Gungijuri *haor* between the Barak and the Satgaon hills. At the northern end of this *haor* the traffic divides, and boats for Balaganj, the Manu, Karimganj, and Cachar, join the Barak just below Bahadurpur. From here to Balaganj the boats keep to the river, but between Balaganj and Karimganj there are numerous short cuts.

* *Vide* Deputy Commissioner's General Administration Report for 1880-81.

Boats going towards Sylhet leave the Gungijuri *haor* at Nabiganj, and travel due north to Enathganj and Haripur Bazars. From there they go by the Itakhola and Babna rivers, past Biswanath Bazar and Lala Bazar to Tuker Bazar, where they enter the Surma a little below Sylhet. The down traffic keeps of course more close to the rivers to get the benefit of the current, but the up traffic not only has the advantage of the short cuts outlined above, but generally also has the wind behind it.

In addition to the various navigable rivers, details for which are given in the statement appended to this chapter, there are two important channels which connect or nearly connect the Surma and the Kusiyara. Except when the river is at its lowest, travellers from Cachar to Sylhet can avoid the Kanairghat loop of the Surma by proceeding down the Kusiyara to a place about fifteen miles below Karimganj, which is connected by a navigable channel with the Surma. During the rainy season, too, it is possible to boat from Fenchuganj *via* the Korkuchi khal, the Hailka Barna *haor*, the Khesab khal, the Basudeb khal, and the Tola khal to a point about two miles south of Sylhet town.

Road system.

Under native rule there was not a single high road in Sylhet, and the district depended on its numerous waterways for the transport of internal trade, and for communication with the outside world. Mr. Lodge reported in 1794 that the only roads in the districts were those in Sylhet town, which had been made by his predecessor at his own

expense, and were kept in repair at Mr. Lodge's own cost. Since that date the condition of affairs has been completely altered and the district is now well supplied with highways, though during the rainy season journeys are generally made by boat. At the present day there are 120 miles of road maintained by the Public Works Department, and nearly 1,200 miles of main and secondary roads kept up by the Local Boards, details for which are shown in the following statement:—

Name of Local Board.	Mileage of main roads.	Mileage of secondary roads.	Cold weather tracks, &c.	Total.
North Sylhet ...	143	35	238	416
Sunamganj ...	29	16	......	45
Habiganj ...	121	36	114	271
South Sylhet ...	155	118	......	273
Karimganj ...	121	51	......	172
Total ...	569	256	352	1,177

None of the main roads are metalled, but they are raised well above flood level, and as there is very little cart traffic, they are not much cut up even in the rainy season. The smaller rivers and streams are crossed by bridges, which are generally of a permanent or semi-per-

manent nature; though bamboo structures are still occasionally to be found and are always used on the cold weather roads. The larger rivers have to be crossed in ferry boats.

North Sylhet roads.

One of the principal thoroughfares is the road from Sylhet to Cachar which runs close to the left bank of the river Surma as far as Ramda, where it turns south to Karimganj and leaves the district at Badarpur forty miles from Sylhet town. This is, however, a new alignment and the old road, which is still kept in repair, kept close to the bank of the Surma the whole way from Churkhai to the junction of that river with the Kusiyara. Both the old and the new road are fit for wheeled traffic throughout the year, and there are inspection bungalows at Golapganj, Ramda, and Sheolamukh at the 11th, 18th, and 23rd mile from Sylhet, and dak bungalows at Karimganj and Badarpur. Most of the bridges are of a permanent or semi-permanent character, but even in the dry season there are four ferries to be crossed—over the Surma at Sylhet, over the Kusiyara at Sheolamukh and Karimganj, and again over the Surma at Katagang. Westward this road is continued to Sunamganj, a distance of 41 miles. It is fit for wheeled traffic during the cold weather as far as Govindganj, but in the rainy season goods and passengers alike go by the Surma river and local pedestrians alone are likely to use the highway. Inspection bungalows are maintained along this section of the road at Govindganj, Pagla, and Kaitak, which are situated on the 14th, 22nd, and 30th mile from Sylhet respectively.

Other roads in North Sylhet.

North of the town, a cart road runs 17 miles to Companyganj, crossing ferries at Salutiker, and at Companyganj where there is an inspection bungalow. Prior to the earthquake, a small railway ran from Companyganj to Therriaghat at the foot of the Khasi Hills; but this line was wrecked by that terrible convulsion of nature, and there is now only a bridle path which is hardly fit for use during the rains. At this season of the year, travellers from Cherrapunji generally go by boat from Therriaghat to Chhatak, and thence by steamer to Sylhet. Another road runs north-west from Sylhet to Jaintiapur. As far as Haripur, where there is an inspection bungalow, 14 miles from Sylhet town, the road is drivable throughout the year, but here the level sinks, and for a length of about four miles the road goes under water in the rains. The total distance to Jaintiapur, where there is an inspection bungalow, is 26 miles, and from here there is a bridle path through Jowai to Shillong, a distance of 64 miles. From Jaintiapur a road runs past Kanairghat, where there is an inspection bungalow, till it meets the old Cachar road 29 miles from Sylhet. The total length of this road is 21 miles, and, at the fifth mile from Jaintiapur, another road runs eastward to the boundary of the district at Natwanpur and connects with a bridle path from Silchar. A driving road also runs from Sylhet, a distance of 23 miles, to Sherpur steamer station, in the south-west corner of the *sadr* subdivision. It was intended that this road should be met by a road to be constructed from Habiganj by the Local Board of that subdivision, but only four miles of the projected road are as yet completed.

There is an inspection bungalow at Tajpur, 15 miles from Sylhet, and also at Sherpur. Another inspection bungalow is situated at Dhakadakshin or Thakurbari, the home of Chaitanya's father, which is connected by a short branch road with the Sylhet-Cachar road at Golapganj.

South Sylhet roads.

A second main thoroughfare, 79 miles long, runs from Sylhet to Habiganj, through Fenchuganj, Kajaldhara, Srimangal, and Mirpur. There is a dak bungalow at Fenchuganj, where the road crosses the Surma river, and inspection bungalows at Srimangal and Mirpur. The subdivisional headquarters station at Maulavi Bazar is connected with this highway by a road running past Rajnagar to Kajaldhara, and thence past Hingajiya thana to the old Faticoolie guard in the hills; and by two other roads to Shamshernagar and Srimangal, at both of which places there are stations on the Assam-Bengal Railway. These two roads are connected by a third which runs across the Balisira hills, and at Narainganj, on the Maulavi Bazar-Shamshernagar road, another road turns south to Adampur. There is an inspection bungalow on this road a little to the south of the point where it crosses the Sylhet-Habiganj thoroughfare. Various minor roads run from the Maulavi Bazar-Kajaldhara road to the tea gardens in the Ita hills. A road also runs from Maulavi Bazar to Manumukh steamer station on the Kusiyara river, where there is a dak bungalow. It is 9½ miles long, but as the distance by river is very little longer, the latter route is generally preferred for journeys down stream.

Habiganj roads.

The most important road in the Habiganj subdivision is the one that runs from Habiganj to the railway station at Saistaganj, the first section of which is part of the great semi-circular road from Habiganj to Sylhet. This road is continued from Saistaganj up the valley of the Khowai past Muchikandi, to Assampara 23½ miles from Habiganj. From Mirpur, which is situated on the Sylhet-Habiganj road, a little to the east of Saistaganj, a road runs past that place, Shahji Bazar, and Jagadishpur to Chakerghat in the extreme south-west corner of the district. From Jagadishpur a road runs west to Madhabpur, and from Surma a road runs east which joins the Muchikandi road a little north of that place, but part of it goes over private land. Another important road runs from Shahji Bazar past Lalchand to Laskarpur garden ; and there are roads from Habiganj to the steamer station at Madna on the Dhaleswari river, and northwards to Baniyachung, but the two last are only open for traffic in the winter. From Mirpur a road runs past the Satgaon hills to Putijuri, a distance of 8 miles. There is a dak bungalow at Habiganj, and inspection bungalows at Mirpur, Shahji Bazar, Jagadishpur, Putijuri, Saistaganj railway station, Madna, Chunarughat, and Baniyachung.

Sunamganj.

The only regular road in the Sunamganj subdivision is the one to which reference has been already made which connects it with Sylhet, but in the cold weather there are tracks to Dharmapasha and Mullapara, with inspection bungalows at Sachna on the former and Mullapara on the latter route.

Karimganj.

Apart from the old and the new alignment of the Sylhet Cachar road, the principal roads in Karimganj are those to Hingajiya and Oliviachara. The latter runs due south from Karimganj up the valley of the Langai past Nilambazar to Patharkandi. Here it crosses the Pratapgarh hills into the valley of the Sonai, or Chargola valley, as it is generally called, up which it runs to Oliviachara, 41 miles from Karimganj. There are inspection bungalows at Nilambazar on the 10th mile, at Patharkandi 10 miles further on, and at Dullabchara on the 34th mile. There are ferries at the 1st, 3rd, and 34th miles, but the rest of the road is furnished with substantial bridges. At Fakirhat a little to the west of Karimganj, a road branches off from the Sylhet-Cachar road and runs along the west of the Phathariya and Langla hills, past Latu, Shabazpur, Barlekha, Dakhinbhag, Kulaura, and Hingajiya to Duttgram, which is situated at the point where the Tippera boundary and the Manu meet. There are inspection bungalows at Barlekha on the 15th mile, and at Kulaura in the South Sylhet subdivision. This road is connected with the Langai valley road by roads that run across the Pathariya hills from Barlekha to Patharkandi, a distance of 13½ miles and from Shabazpur to Nilambazar, a distance of 8 miles. A little to the south of Shabazpur, a road runs 5 miles west to Jaldhub, and thence 7 miles north to the Bairagi Bazar steamer station on the Kusiyara. All of these roads, with the exception of the sections already mentioned, are raised above flood level and are open to wheeled traffic throughout the year.

Post and Telegraph.

The following statement shows what an enormous development of postal business there has been since 1861 :—

Number of Post Offices in 1903-04.	Number of letters and post cards omitting thousands delivered in			Number of Savings Bank accounts in		Balance at credit of the depositors.	
	1861-62	1870-71	1903-04	1871-72	1903-04	1871-72	1903-04
						Rs.	Rs.
115	38	82	2,359	39	4,711	16,000	5,92,000

A list of post and telegraph offices will be found in the Appendix.

Commerce & Trade : general remarks.

There is a considerable difference between the machinery of trade in Sylhet and in the Brahmaputra Valley. The Assamese have no commercial aptitude, and almost the whole of the trade of their country has passed into the hands of natives of Rajputana or Ajmer-Merwara. These enterprising merchants buy up the products of the valley and the adjacent hills, and despatch them by steamer to Calcutta, and by the same route they obtain the salt, oil, piece-goods, and other commodities which they retail to the villager or garden cooly. Trade is centralized in the hands of a single community, many of whose members are possessed of considerable influence and wealth, and are substantial merchants and not mere petty shop-keepers. The trade of Sylhet has been to a great extent retained in the hands of the natives of the district, and its profits

are more widely distributed than in Assam.* Traders from Bengal come up the rivers in the rains, and buy direct from the cultivators, either at the bazars, which are generally situated on the river's bank, or in the villages themselves. There are of course merchants at the principal centres, many of whom amass considerable fortunes, but they do not carry on their operations on such an extensive scale as do their confréres in the Assam Valley. Their shops are small and mean in comparison with the large masonry buildings in the bazars of Gauhati and Dibrugarh, and they lean more to the retail than the wholesale side of commerce.

Direction of Trade. Trade with Khasi Hills.

The trade of the district is carried on with Cachar, the Khasi Hills, Hill Tippera, and Bengal. No attempt is made to register the trade with the first two districts, and that with Cachar is probably not large. From the Khasi Hills come potatoes, oranges, limestone, pan, bay leaves and cotton, which are carried down by coolies, who return with rice, dried fish, and oil. But the great bulk of these imports from the Khasi Hills, merely pass through the district of Sylhet and their ultimate destination is Calcutta.

The principal bazars are situated at the foot of the hills at Mulagul, Jaintiapur, Jaflang, Lakhat, and Bholaganj. At the two latter places market dues are levied by the Khasi Siems of Cherra and Khyrim.

* The population of the Surma Valley was slightly larger than that of the Brahmaputra Valley in 1901, but it contained only 525 natives of Rajputana and Ajmer-Merwara as compared with 8,681 in the northern valley.

Trade with Hill Tippera.

Trade from Hill Tippera comes down the Langai, Singla, Juri, Manu, and Khowai rivers, and is registered at Muchikandi in the Habiganj subdivision and at Nowakhali in South Sylhet.

Imports.

	Rs. (omitting thousands)
Timber ..	.. 217
Bamboos	.. 90
Canes ..	.. 12
Raw cotton	.. 58
Til ..	.. 25

The principal imports are timber, bamboos, and canes, raw cotton, and *til*. The statement in the margin shows the average annual value of each of these articles during the three years ending with 1903-04. The chief exports are dried fish worth some Rs. 20,000, cotton yarn and piece-goods, and tobacco, but the exports are small in comparison with the imports. This is only natural as Sylhet exports raw material and it is manufactured products that Hill Tippera requires. The trade is to some extent hampered by the heavy export duties charged by the Tippera authorities. Cleaned cotton has to pay as much as Rs. 4 per maund, *til* Rs. 1-6-0 per maund, and mustard As. 9 per maund. Duties are also levied on timber and other forest produce.

Trade with Bengal.

Sylhet exports to Bengal little but raw materials—the principal exports consisting of unhusked rice, tea, oil seeds, hides, bamboos and mats; and lime, oranges, and potatoes which come in the first place from the Khasi Hills. The chief imports are cotton piece-goods, salt, tobacco, sugar, and oil. The following statement shows the average weight of the principal imports and exports during the five years ending with March 31st, 1903.

Statement showing the Imports and Exports in maunds and numbers (thousands omitted).

Articles of import.		Average for 5 years ending 31st March 1903.	Articles of Export.		Average for 5 years ending 31st March 1903.
		Mds			Mds
Coal and coke	...	219	Bamboos ...	No.	7,423
Cocoanuts ...	No.	1,181	Coal and coke	...	10 (a)
Gram and pulse	...	189	Cotton ...	...	11
Metals ...	...	87	Hides and skins	...	17
Oils ...	...	211	Jute ..	...	24
Potatoes ...	...	35	Mats ...	...	138
Rice not in the husk	...	268	Oil seeds ...	...	106
Salt ...	..	284	Oranges ...	No.	15,474
Spices ...	...	159	Provisions ..	...	93
Sugar ...	...	240	Rice in the husk	...	1,670
Tobacco ...	...	89	Rice not in the husk	...	200
Flour ...	...	30 (b)	Spices ..	...	28
Piece goods	...	42	Stone and lime	...	1,847
			Wood ...	...	11 (b)

(a) Figure for 1903. (b) Average for 3 years.

Statistics of the weight of goods carried by railway and steamer are obtained from the companies concerned and can be accepted as correct. Boat traffic is registered at Bhairab Bazar, and it is only probable that the cargoes of boats that pass at night, or on days when the current is running strong and there is a fresh breeze blowing, are omitted from the registers. The recorded volume of trade is thus in all probability smaller than the actual quantity.

The great bulk of the trade is still carried by water, and in 1902-03 only 18 per cent. of the imports and 9 per cent. of the exports went by rail. A large proportion of the river borne trade is carried in country boats, which, though slow, are comparatively cheap. A

list of the principal rivers used for traffic is appended to this chapter.

The district bazars.

The principal centres of trade in Sylhet are the district and subdivisional headquarters, Ajmiriganj, Balaganj, and Chhatak. Most of the business of the district is transacted at bazars which are generally situated on the banks of rivers. The villagers assemble at these places once or twice a week and exchange the products of their farms, and there are generally a few permanent shops which are kept open throughout the year. A list of these bazars will be found in Statement C. in the Appendix. Sylhet town, which is fairly typical of the larger centres, has two distinct bazars. The streets of the Bunder Bazar are not unlike some of the less important thoroughfares of Calcutta. There are rows of small mean shops in which the would be purchaser can obtain such things as piece-goods, clothes of all sorts and kinds, stationery, enamelled cups and saucers, *hukkas*, umbrellas, lamps, candles, buttons and general haberdashery, iron pots and pans, steel trunks, furniture of wood and wickerwork, and different sorts of bangles. There are in addition two or three shops which cater for the wants of the European community and a vendor of imported liquor. In the Kazi Bazar the staple articles of trade are various kinds of grain, vegetables, spices, tobacco, molasses, mats, pottery, and kerosine oil.

Municipalities: Sylhet.

The district contains only two urban areas in which municipal law is in force, *i. e.*, Sylhet and Habiganj. Sylhet was first

constituted a municipality under Act V. (B. C.) of 1876 in 1878. Act III. (B. C.) of 1884 was introduced in 1888. Habiganj was constituted a union under Act V. (B. C.) of 1876 in 1881.

The municipal committee of Sylhet consists of 15 members, of whom 10 are elected and 12 are non-officials, and they are presided over by a non-official chairman. The principal taxes imposed are (1) A tax on persons at the rate of $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. of the annual incomes of the assessees; (2) a tax on Government buildings at the rate of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the annual value; and (3) a latrine tax at the rate of fifteen per cent. on the value of holdings ranging from Re. 1 to Rs. 12 in annual value, five per cent. for holdings with an annual value of between Rs. 13 and Rs. 100, four per cent. if the annual value is between Rs. 101 and Rs. 300, and three per cent. if it exceeds that sum. Sylhet is the largest town in the Province, but its income per head of population during the year 1902-03 was lower than that of any other urban area except Habiganj, Goalpara, and Barpeta. The incidence of taxation on persons was only As. 6-1 per head of population, a rate lower than that prevailing in any town in the Province except Habiganj, Nowgong, and Golaghat. The principal sources of income are the tax on persons and on Government buildings, the conservancy rate, and the tolls on ferries across the Surma, which are to a great extent paid by persons residing outside the municipality. The lowness of the assessment is not, it may be added, due to the want of objects upon which public funds might be suitably expended.

Habiganj.

The affairs of Habiganj are managed by a Committee of five nominated members presided over by the Subdivisional Officer. The principal sources of income are pounds, ferries, a grant from the Local Board of Rs. 1,000, and a tax on persons. The latter item is practically the only portion of the public income that is drawn from the inhabitants of the union, and the incidence per head only amounts to As. 4-9. The people of Habiganj may thus look upon themselves as very lightly taxed. Details with regard to the principal items of expenditure and revenue in Sylhet and Habiganj in 1890-91 and 1900-01 will be found in Table XVI.

Sylhet Town.

Sylhet town presents a rather mournful spectacle of general degeneration and decay. In the days of Muhammadan rule it must have been a place of some importance, and Mr. John Willes reports that the population at the time of the permanent settlement was 75,382. At first sight it would appear that he must have been referring to a much larger area than the town itself, as his predecessor, Mr. Lindsay, characterised it as "an inconsiderable bazar or market place." On the other hand, in 1800 A. D., the Collector proposed to impose a tax on all houses in the *kasbah* or town of Sylhet, of which he said that there were supposed to be some 31,220, all of which were apparently situated on the land on which no revenue had been assessed. In 1811, this assessment was imposed ; it was found that there were 10,098 houses, but the total amount of the tax assessed was only Rs. 926-0. Considerable

opposition had been offered to the assessment, the householders had declined to supply the assessing officers with the information they required, and the shop-keepers had closed their shops. The assessment was, on the face of it, ridiculous. But the Collector did not seem disposed to press the point, and proposed, that as the tax had proved, as taxes always do, unpopular, and, as the demand was inconsiderable and out of all proportion to the cost of realisation, the matter might be dropped. In 1813, the Collector estimated the population of Sylhet town as 30,000 persons living within a circuit of two *koss*, *i. e.*, four miles. The first regular census was taken in 1872 when the population was reported to be 16,846 souls. Since that date it has steadily declined, the figures being 1881, 14,407 ; 1891, 14,027 ; and 1901, 13,893, though in the latter year the total was swelled by the inclusion of some 500 workmen who were engaged in the reconstruction of the public buildings that had been demolished by the earthquake.

General appearance of town.

The town is situated on the north bank of the Surma, and, viewed from the river, seems to consist of two bazars, the Kazi and the Bunder, with an open space in the centre, in which are situated the public offices. The Deputy Commissioners' house stands on the west side of a large tank, near the site which was formerly occupied by the bungalow of Mr. Thackeray, the first Resident of Sylhet, and is confronted by a long row of spacious but somewhat mean looking cutcherries. The Bunder Bazar consists of rows of small shops, in which piece-goods, clothes, and general haberdashery can be procured.

In the Kazi Bazar most of the merchants deal in grain and food stuffs, and their transactions are on a somewhat larger scale. It is here that markets are held on Mondays and Fridays to which the villagers bring their produce for disposal. The residential portion of the town lies back from the river, and its most striking characteristic is the dense jungle of bamboo in which the houses are almost invariably embedded. There are numerous roads, many of which are metalled and supplied with solid masonry bridges, but crumbling houses and deserted homesteads are evidence of a glory that has passed away. On every side are to be seen small mosques and the masonry tombs of dead Muhammadan saints, in whose honour lamps are still kindled at nightfall by the faithful. About a mile north of the river is the old polo ground, and the bells of arms which recall the time when a detachment of the Sylhet Light Infantry, whose headquarters were at Cherrapunji, was stationed in the town ; while close by is the famous mosque of Shah Jalal. It is in this quarter that most of the houses of the European residents are situated, on low hills from which a fine view is obtained over the surrounding plains, and it is here that the Idgarh has been built, a large masonry platform surrounded by brick walls, on which service is held on the occasion of the Ids.

The public buildings include the courts and offices of the Deputy Commissioner, the Judge, the Sub-judges and the Munsifs, a large jail, the Murarichand second grade college which has been founded and endowed by Raja Girish Chandra Rai, a Government high school, eight other

schools for boys and two for girls, a church, a dispensary and leper asylum, a town hall, and a public library. There are fourteen masonry wells in the town, but most of the people take their water from the river or from small tanks in the compounds of their houses. No less than twenty-four miles of unmetalled and eight miles of metalled road are maintained by the municipality, and as, owing to the extremely light incidence of municipal taxation, the funds at their disposal are not large, many of them are not in very good repair. The roads in Sylhet are rendered beautiful by the groves of graceful bamboos with which they are shaded on either side; but, apart from this, the town has a somewhat unkempt and desolate appearance, and there are no signs of flourishing trade, prosperity, or wealth. This, however, is but natural. In the days of Mughal rule it enjoyed the prestige which naturally attaches to the residence of a native official of some importance. It was the largest town on the frontier and was thus the centre of some trade. But with the opening up of Cachar and the development of the southern and eastern portion of the district, trade was naturally diverted to the more direct route along the Kusiyara. The process was accelerated by the gradual silting up of the bed of the Surma and the enormous expansion of the tea industry both in Cachar and later on in the southern portion of Sylhet, which stimulated the growth of places like Balaganj and Karimganj.

Habiganj.

The town of Habiganj stands at the confluence of the Barak and the Khowai in 24° 23′ N. and 91° 26′ E. Like most of the villages in this inundated tract it is built on the banks of the

rivers, which are raised a little above the level of the surrounding country. The public buildings and the residential quarter are situated on the left bank of the Khowai, but the most populous and wealthiest portion of the bazar is situated on the left bank of the Barak. There is a considerable trade, most of which goes by country boat. The principal imports are grain and pulse, cotton piece goods, kerosine and other oils, and salt. The chief exports are unhusked rice, jute, mustard, linseed, and hides. The majority of the merchants are natives of the district and members of the Shaha caste. The population of the town in 1901 was 5,236.

Sunamganj.

Sunamganj is a small town with only 3,530 inhabitants on the left bank of the Surma. During the rains the whole of the country in the neighbourhood is submerged, and there is a fine view across this waste of waters to the Khasi Hills. The town practically consists of a single road along the river bank, and is altogether a most unprepossessing place.

Maulavi Bazar.

Maulavi Bazar, the headquarters of the South Sylhet subdivision, has a population of 2,481 persons. It consists of a small bazar on the left bank of the Manu. About a mile to the south, the subdivisional officer's bungalow and court and the subdivisional jail stand upon the northern slopes of the Balisira Hills, a tract of elevated rolling country which rises a few hundred feet above the level of the plain.

Karimganj.

Karimganj, the capital of the subdivision of that name, stands on the left bank of the Kusiyara river, in 24° 52′ N. and 92° 2′ E. There is a small bazar near the water's edge, but the place is favourably situated for the purposes of trade as, in addition to the facilities which it enjoys for water transport, the railway passes only a mile away to the south. The public offices and the bungalow of the Subdivisional Officer have been built on the summit of low hills; and command a fine view of the blue ranges of North Cachar. The population of Karimganj in 1901 was 5,692.

Ajmiriganj.

There are other places which, though not worthy of the name of town, are still of sufficient importance to merit special mention. Ajmiriganj is situated in 24° 33′ N. and 91° 15′ E. on the banks of the Surma river, and in 1901 had a population of 583 persons. It is an important centre of trade, the chief exports being rice, dried fish, bamboos, and mats, and the imports, grain, oil, salt, tobacco, sugar, and piece-goods. Trade is carried on largely by country boat, though the village is a place of call for steamers.

Balaganj.

Balaganj is situated in 24° 39′ N. and 91° 50′ E., on a narrow spit of land between the Kusiyara and the Barbhanga rivers. It is little more than a mud bank, and is not even connected by road with any other place, but it is admirably situated for the purposes of water communication and is now the most important centre of trade in the Surma

Valley, with a large business in rice, mustard, linseed, jute, oil, *sitalpati* mats, and salt. The village is a place of call for river steamers, and a European firm has opened a warehouse for the sale of salt and oil.

Baniyachung.

Baniyachung is stuated in 24° 31' N. and 91° 21' E. It is the largest village in the Province, and in 1901 had a population of 28,883. It is said to have been founded in the first half of the 18th century by Abid Reza, the first of the converted Hindu Rajas of Laur, who submitted to pay tribute to the Mughals. The village contains a mosque of great local repute, a dispensary, a high school, two bazars, and about two hundred shops. It is surrounded by a moat and the houses are closely packed together on islets of high land separated from one another by marshy ground and watercourses.

Chhatak.

Chhatak is situated in 25° 2' N. and 91° 40' E., on the left bank of the Surma river. The river is navigable by steamers up to this point all the year round, and there is a large export trade to Bengal in lime, potatoes, and oranges. A tall and massive masonry obelisk, erected in memory of Mr. Inglis, who founded a large business in lime, stands on the summit of a low hill, from which a magnificent view is obtained over river, swamp, and forest to the blue line of the Khasi Hills, which rise like a wall from the plains.* This obelisk was cracked in three places by the earthquake of 1897, and the pieces were wrenched round in

* An account of the Inglis family will be found in the Gazetteer of the Khasi Hills.

the same plane without being thrown down. The village is built along the left bank of the Surma, as in Sylhet the banks of the rivers are the highest part of the country.

Local Boards.

In 1872, the management of the district roads was entrusted to a committee presided over by the Deputy Commissioner. The funds at their disposal were partly obtained from tolls and ferries on local roads and other miscellaneous sources, but principally from grants made by the Bengal Government from the amalgamated district road fund. In 1874, when Assam was erected into a separate Administration, the Government of India assigned one-seventeenth of the net land revenue for local purposes. The district improvement fund was then started, and the administration of its resources was, as before, entrusted to the Deputy Commissioner assisted by a committee. The actual amount placed at their disposal was not large, and, in 1875-76, the total income of the district funds of the Province was only Rs. 1,85,000, which was a small sum in comparison with the twelve and a half lakhs of rupees received by the Local Boards in 1903-04. In 1879, a Regulation was passed, providing for the levy of a local rate, and the appointment of a committee in each district to control the expenditure on roads, primary education, and the district post. Three years later the district committees were abolished by executive order, and their place was taken by boards established in each subdivision, which are the local authorities in existence at the present day.

Functions of Boards.

The Deputy Commissioner is chairman of the board of the headquarters subdivision, but each of the other boards in the district is presided over by the Subdivisional Officer. The Local Boards are entrusted with the maintenance of all roads within their jurisdiction, except a few main lines of traffic which have been retained under the direct management of the Public Works Department, with the provision and maintenance of local staging bungalows and dispensaries, and with the supervision of village sanitation, vaccination, and the district post. They are also in charge of primary education, subject to the general control of the Education Department, and are empowered to make grants-in-aid to schools of higher grade, subject to certain rules. For these purposes, they have placed at their disposal the rate which is levied under the Assam Local Rates Regulation of 1879, at the rate of one anna per rupee on the annual value of lands, as well as the surplus income of pounds and ferries, and some minor receipts. This income is supplemented by an annual grant from Provincial Funds. The principal heads of income and expenditure are shown in Table XV.

The annual budgets of the boards are submitted to the Commissioner for sanction. The estimates for all works costing Rs. 500 or over must be submitted to the Public Works Department for approval, and important works, requiring much professional skill, are made over for execution to that department. Less important works are entrusted to the Board surveyors.

The roads of Sylhet are of comparatively recent origin, and the great majority of them have been constructed by the various Local Boards. In South Sylhet the local authority has provided funds for the construction of 173 miles of road and 28 permanent bridges. In Karimganj 121 miles of road have been completed. The Habiganj Board, in addition to making many miles of road, has paid for 30 permanent and 22 semi-permanent bridges. The expression "paid for" is used advisedly, as, when the work presents any special engineering difficulties, it is generally entrusted to the Public Works Department for execution.

List of Navigable rivers in Sylhet.

Name of River.	Course.		Highest point which can be reached by boat of 4 tons burthen.	
	From	To	In the cold weather.	In the rains.
North Sylhet Subdivision.				
Amirdin	Barak	Itakhola at Mandaruka ...	Not navigable ...	Throughout the entire length
Babna	Bahia	Itakhola	Do. ...	Do.
Bahia	Surma at Tukerbazar ...	Babna at Biswanath ...	Do. ...	Do.
Barbhanga	Barak at Moghul Bazar ...	Kusiyara at Balaganj ...	Do. ...	Do.
Betua	Bahia	Tolakhal	Do. ...	Do.
Charchandi	Bahia at Biswanath ...	Jamai Kata *haor* ...	Do. ...	Do.
Chengar Khal ...	Goyain	Surma at Kalaruka ...	Up to Goyainghat	Do.
Goyain	Hill at Jaflang ...	Chengarkhal at Goyainghat	Not navigable ...	Do.
Juri	Dharamnagar hills ...	Kusiyara at Fenchuganj	Up to Ghilachara	Entire length.
Kapna	Kusi	Jalu	Not navigable ...	Do.

List of Navigable rivers in Sylhet.—contd.

Name of River.	Course.		Highest point which can be reached by boat of 4 tons burthen.	
	From	To	In the cold weather.	In the rains.
North Sylhet Subdivision.—contd.				
Katagang	Kusiyara	Surma	Entire length ...	Entire length.
Kusi	Kapna	Do. ...	Not navigable ...	Do.
Line	Khasi Hills	Shair	Do. ...	Do.
Peein	Do. ...	Surma near Chhatak ...	Up to Lakhat Bazar	Do.
Shair	Line	Chengarkhal at Goyainghat	Not navigable ...	Do.
Sunamganj Subdivision.				
Chamti	Mahasingh river near Nagdipur ...	Bheramuna	Up to Habibpur ...	Do.
Dakua	Rasulganj	Kamarkhali	Up to Rasulganj ...	Do.
Itakhola	Junction of the Babna and Amirdin at Mandaruka	Kusiyara near Katia ...	Up to Sibganj Bazar ..	Do.

Jadukata ..	Khasi Hills	Raktee	Not navigable ...	Up to Panatirtha Bazar.
Khasimara	Do. ...	Surma near Dwara Bazar	Do. ...	Throughout the whole length up to the foot of the hills.
Mahasingh	Dekar *haor* ...	Kamarkhal	Up to village Hasonpur situated on the southern side of Dekar *haor* ...	Entire length.
Mahishkhola	Khasi Hills	Someswari river near Madhyanagar ...	Up to Ghilachuka	Up to Mahish khola Bazar.
Mara Surma	Surma near village Nagadia ...	Bheramuna opposite Ajmiriganj Bazar ...	Up to Rajanager...	Entire length.
Painda	Surma at Painda ferry ...	Dhanu river	Entire length ...	Do.
Piyain	Khasi Hills ...	Dhanu river in the Mymensingh district ...	Up to Bhatipara	Up to the foot of the Laur hills.
HABIGANJ	SUBDIVISION.			
Balikhal	Barak	Ratna near Balakipur ...	Entire length ...	Entire length.
Bijna	Gopla	Barak near Tongirghat ...	Do. ...	Do.
Gopla	Hill Tippera ...	Barak near Jalalshap ...	Up to Matiganj ...	Up to the foot of the hills.

List of navigable Rivers in Sylhet—concld.

NAME OF RIVER.	COURSE.		Highest point which can be reached by boat of 4 tons burthen.	
	From	To	In the cold weather.	In the rains.
HABIGANJ	SUBDIVISION—concld.			
Gungijuri	Gopla near Tarapasha ...	Bijna at Noakhal ...	Entire length ...	Entire length.
Karangi	Hill Tippera ...	Barak *viâ* Noakhal ...	Not navigable ...	Do.
Khowai	Do. ...	Barak near Habiganj ...	Up to Mashajan ...	Up to Ballabazar at the foot of the hills.
Ratna	Barak near Ujirpur ...	Barak near Bajuka ...	From Barak to Balikhal ...	From Barak to Khagaura.
Sonai	Hill Tippera ...	Titash	Not navigable ...	Upwards to Mantala and some distance beyond.
Sutang	Do. ...	Dhaleswari near Lakhai ..	From Dhaleswari to Noagaon ...	Up to the village Lalchand.

	SOUTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION.			
Dholai	Hill Tippera ...	Manu river near Chaudhury Bazar	Not navigable ...	Entire length up to the foot of the hills.
Manu	Do. ...	Kusiyara at Manumukh ...	Do. ...	Do.
	KARIMGANJ SUBDIVISION.			
Kachua	Son *bil*	Kusiyara	Do. ...	Up to Son *bil*.
Langai*	Hills to the south of the Sylhet district ...	Hakaluki *haor* ...	Not navigable ...	Up to Hatikhira.
Singla	Lushai Hills ...	Son *bil*	Do. ...	Up to Dullabhchara.

* In the rains it is connected with the Kusiyara by the Natia Khal.

CHAPTER VII.

General Administration.

Land Revenue—Early Settlements—The Permanent Settlement—The Hill Tracts—Temporarily settled estates—Disforestation—The Jaintia Parganas—Tea Land—Land revenue collection—Excise—Income-tax—Stamps—Public Works—Government—Administrative subdivisions—Criminal and Civil Justice—Registration—Police—Chaukidars—Volunteering—Jails—Education—Medical—Leper Asylum—Surveys.

Land Revenue.

For the purposes of land revenue administration the district is divided into two distinct areas. Sylhet proper came into the possession of the Company when they acquired the *diwani* of Bengal in 1765, and a considerable portion of it was included in the permanent settlement; whereas the Jaintia Parganas were not annexed till 1835, and, like the rest of the Province, are temporarily settled.* Sylhet proper, again, is not a homogeneous tract, but scattered over the permanently settled area there are a large number of estates which were occupied and settled at various dates subsequent to the permanent settlement; while in the south of the district there were extensive tracts of jungle to which claims of a somewhat vague and dubious character were put forward by the neighbouring land-holders.

The whole history of the land revenue system of Sylhet is thus of a very complicated character, and cannot be adequately dealt with in the pages of a District Gazetteer. A more detailed account of the subject will

* Even in the Jaintia Parganas there are, however, 33 permanently settled estates.

be found in the Introduction to the Assam Land Revenue Manual, by Sir W. E. Ward, K. C. S. I., pages CXIII—CLVIII.

Early Settlements.

The earliest settlement of Sylhet proper was that made by Tudar Mall in 1582, and he is said to have assessed the revenue at Rs. 1,67,040.* This would, however, have been a rather heavy assessment in comparison with the demand of later years, and it is not probable that the whole of this amount was ever credited in the Imperial Treasury. In 1728, the land revenue actually paid to Government is said to have amounted to Rs. 70,076, and in 1787 Mr. Lindsay reported that it had never exceeded Rs. 1,25,000. In 1776, Mr. Holland assessed the district at about Rs. 2,00,000, and six years later it was farmed out at Rs. 2,50,000, but this amount could never be collected. A few years later Mr. Lindsay concluded his settlement for Rs. 1,87,500.†

The Permanent Settlement.

Up to this time, the settlements seem to have been of a very tentative and temporary character, but in 1788 a step was taken which was destined to leave a permanent mark upon the district. In the cold weather of 1788-89 the Collector, Mr. Willes, commenced his measurements and settlements, and in August 1789 he reported that the work had been completed. He did not, as in most of the other districts of

* Principal Heads of the History and Statistics of the Dacca Division page 292.

† The revenue was actually assessed and paid in cowries, and in converting it into rupees four *kahons* of cowries have been taken to be equal to one rupee, but the rate of exchange varied considerably at different times.

Bengal, enter into engagements with the *chaudris* or land revenue collectors, but settlement was as a rule made direct with the actual cultivators of the soil. The total area covered by his operations was 2,100 square miles, and the character of a detailed settlement, which was carried out over such an extensive area in a single working season, can better be imagined than described. His work must, however, have been so frequently anathematised by his successors, that it is only fair to add that Mr. Willes was not a willing agent in the matter. He wrote somewhat plaintively on the subject to Government in 1790, and it is only fair that he should be heard in his own defence—" I shall first observe that the *hastabud* of the district did not originate with me......had I consulted my own ease in preference to my duty I might have stated many plausible objections......as soon as the rains would admit I entered on the disagreeable task, and in the execution of it I have received every possible opposition from the Kanungoes and other Mussalman inhabitants......yet, gentlemen, I shall ever conceive it peculiarly unlucky that I should have been so unremittingly employed for a year on an object of so little import to Government, that any credit I might otherwise have obtained is lost in its insignificancy." *

Mr. Willes did not, moreover, anticipate that this extremely perfunctory settlement would be accepted as a

* Letter No. 119, dated 24-2-1790. The concluding paragraph recalls a similar complaint made by Col. Hopkinson, Commissioner of Assam, who in 1872, after carrying out the re-settlement of the valley, remarked in a letter to the Government of Bengal "I sometimes wonder whether it has often happened to an officer to have taken so large a part in proposing and realizing a measure fraught with such solid advantages to the state as that scheme secured, and to have obtained such scant thanks for it."

permanent engagement between Government and its tenants. Most settlements were at that time for comparatively short periods, and the Collector probably regarded the one carried out under his direction as a temporary makeshift.

He was fully conscious of the imperfections of his work, and for fear lest it might give rise to permanent and serious inconvenience, he caused most of the original documents to be destroyed. The only records in the Collector's office which bear Mr. Willes' signature are the *daul* and *talukwari* registers. The other papers bearing on the settlement were produced by the pargana patwaris in 1802, and are either duplicates prepared at the time of settlement, or unauthenticated copies of those duplicates, or possibly, for all we know, the creations of the patwaris' fancy. The *chittas* purport to show the boundary of each estate, but these boundaries are often of a vague and useless character, and some of the estates are simply said to be bounded by "hills" or "jungle."*

Permanently settled estates not included in Mr. Willes' settlement.

It soon became clear that there were extensive tracts of land which had never come within the purview of Mr. Willes' perfunctory operations, and in 1802 the Collector, under the orders of the Board of Revenue, directed the patwaris to furnish statements of these unsettled lands.

* A list of the records of the decennial settlement in the Sylhet Collectorate will be found in Deputy Commissioner's letter No. 4097, dated 27th August, 1879.

On receipt of these lists, notices (*ilams*) were issued calling on claimants and objectors to come forward. The Board then ordered the Collector to grant leases for the lands reported in the lists of the patwaris, and for other land found outside the boundaries of the permanently settled tract. These leases were issued between 1801 and 1807, and, though the term of settlement was not fixed, it was decided in 1869 to treat these lands as permanently settled. The lists of the patwaris were, however, very incomplete, and subsequent surveys have shown that the district contained nearly a million acres of land, in addition to the estates which had been surveyed and settled.* In 1817, the question of the settlement of these excess lands was again raised, and in 1834 it was decided that excess land, which had been included in the patwaris' *ilam* returns, and to which the rights of Government were undisputed, might be assessed. With regard to the remainder, it was decided in 1840 that they were not worth the trouble and expense of settlement.

The revenue survey of 1859-1865.

Between 1859 and 1865, Sylhet came under the operations of the revenue survey, which is generally known as the *takbast*, as proprietors were then required to demarcate their estates with *taks* or marks.

This survey is of such importance that it is only right that the objects aimed at, and the methods by which it was hoped that they would be attained should be described in some detail. The following account is taken

* The calculation will be found on page CXXX of the introduction to the Assam Land Revenue Manual, Calcutta, 1896.

from a note recorded by the Director of Land Records and Agriculture, Assam, in 1892. The chief design of the survey of a district was to ascertain the position boundaries, and area of every village and estate in that district. In order to ascertain this, two parties went into the field, *viz.* (1) an unprofessional party under a special officer called the Superintendent of Survey aided by Deputy Collectors and an establishment of *peshkars* and *amins*, and (2) the professional party. The work assigned to the unprofessional party consisted in demarcating the boundaries of villages and estates, and settling bounary disputes, and the demarcation was required to be made a whole season in advance of the survey of the district to be undertaken by the professional party.

Before proceeding to demarcate the villages and estates of the district, the Superintendent of Survey received from the Collector lists of all such villages and estates in the district. These lists having been distributed among the several *amins*, to whom the work of demarcation was immediately entrusted, the *amins* proceeded to call upon the zamindars, raiyats, and other occupants of land to point out their boundaries, and, on the boundaries being pointed out, in all cases where the estates or villages given in the Collector's list could be traced, they were demarcated on the ground by *taks* or marks.

In carrying out the work of demarcation, the unprofessional party first laid down the village boundaries, and after that the position and boundaries of all estates having any lands in that village. They also prepared what are known as "*takbast* maps," most of which were on the

scale of 16 inches to the mile, which showed the boundaries not only of the village but also of every estate or portion of an estate included in it. The estates or portions of estates entitled to separate demarcation and entry in these maps are specified in sub-section 12 of section II, Chapter XXIII of the Board's Rules of 1866.

When a sufficient number of contiguous villages, with the estates or portions of estates contained in each village, had been demarcated, a *mujmili* or sketch map was prepared containing 80 to 100 square miles of country, and showing the names and relative positions of the villages which had been demarcated. The professional revenue surveyor then went to work, being guided entirely by the *taks* laid down by the unprofessional *amins*. He, however, confined himself solely to the external boundaries of villages. He had nothing to do with the internal details of villages, *i.e.*, the boundaries of estates or portions of estates beyond calculating the areas of those estates which the Superintendent of Survey sent him for triangulation. The professional maps, therefore, are village maps, showing geographical and topographical features.

Takbast survey brings out great increase in permanently settled area.

The survey was never confirmed as required by section 4 of Act IX of 1847, and its accuracy has more than once been called in question. A test survey was accordingly carried out in 1881-1882, and the conclusion come to was that the original revenue survey, judged as a survey, was probably as accurate as such surveys usually are, but that the boundaries pointed out were in many cases

wrong. The unprofessional party seem to have accepted without question or demur the boundaries pointed out by the proprietors, and it is hardly matter for surprise that there was found to be a large increase in the permanently settled area. These estates in Mr. Willes' day covered an area of 1,685,000 acres; but, on the completion of the *takbast*, the area was found to be 2,231,000 acres. In individual cases the increase was sometimes quite enormous, two of the most flagrant instances being Nos. $\frac{64}{47070}$ Faiz Muhammed and $\frac{73}{47079}$ Makanullah, in mauza Srichandanjum pargana Bhanugach. At the permanent settlement neither of these estates covered as much as three roods of land; the *takbast* allowed each of them 4,725 acres. At the same time, in the absence of any better record, the *takbast* maps are often accepted by the Civil Courts as evidence of boundaries, possession, and title.

Different kinds of permanently settled estates.

In 1902-03, the permanently settled area in Sylhet was said to amount to 2,411,081 acres, classified under the following heads:—

(*a*) *Dassana*, *i.e.*, estates included in the decennial settlement, which became permanent in 1793.

(*b*) *Bazyafti daimi*, *i.e.*, invalid *lakhiraj* lands, resumed by the Special Commissioner appointed under Regulation III of 1828, and then permanently settled.

(*c*) *Ilam daimi*, *i.e.*, *ilam* lands permanently settled.

(*d*) *Khas daimi*, *i.e.*, permanently settled estates purchased by Government at sales for

arrears of revenue, and sold again as permanently settled.

(e) *Halabadi, i.e.*, land which was not included in the decennial settlement, but which was settled without specifying the term of settlement, and was afterwards declared by Government in 1869 to be permanently settled.

(f) *Khas halabadi, i.e.*, estates belonging to class (e), which, on being bought in by Government at sales for arrears of revenue, were subsequently permanently settled.

(g) *Permanently settled waste land grants.*—The proprietors of three *halabadi* estates, paying a revenue of Rs. 9-5-3, claimed a large tract in the Raghunandan hills. Their claims were compromised by the grant in perpetuity of two estates, covering an area of 1,659 acres and paying a revenue of Rs. 9-6-0.

(h) *Izad daimi, i.e.*, excess lands discovered after Mr. Willes' settlement, and then settled permanently.

(i) *Haor mahal.*—Marshy land excluded from Mr. Willes' settlement and subsequently permanently settled.

Subdivision of estates.

Mr. Willes' system of settling direct with the cultivators had the natural result of creating an enormous number of separate holdings, from each of which a distinct and separate payment was required. According to Sir William Hunter, there were, in 1793, 26,393 estates on the rent

roll held by 29,317 separate proprietors.* This in itself was bad enough, but by 1865 the number of permanently settled mahals had doubled, yet only one-fifth of them paid a revenue of five rupees or more. 22,000, or nearly one-half, paid a revenue of one rupee or less, the average demand on account of each estate being about 6½ annas, while another 14,000 estates paid between two and three rupees.

Little advantage taken of concession authorising permanent redemption of the revenue assessed on small estates.

It is hardly necessary to point out that the trouble of collection from such an enormous body of land-holders is out of all proportion to the amount of revenue received. In 1865, the Board of Revenue invited attention to the fact that no less than 437 peons had till recently been employed at *sadr*, and 71 persons, patwaris and others, in the *mofussil*, whose principal duty had been the collection of the revenues.† Such an establishment was not only a source of considerable expenditure to Government, but was a cause of harassment to the people, and it was proposed that proprietors of estates paying not more than one rupee should be allowed to permanently redeem their land revenue at twenty years' purchase. This proposal was sanctioned by the Government of Bengal,‡ but, strange to say, comparatively little advantage was taken of the concession.

In a country like India where the rate of interest is so high, it would not of course pay any one from the

* A Statistical Account of Assam, Vol. II., p. 316.

† Letter No. 370-A., dated 23rd November 1865.

‡ Letter No. 2720, dated 8th July 1867.

strictly pecuniary point of view to redeem a fixed payment at twenty years' purchase, but the sums in question were so small that it was obviously to the interest of the proprietors to free themselves from the necessity of these petty annual payments, even at something above the strict market price. Possibly the orders were not generally known, or obstacles may have been thrown in the way of the people by the Collectorate staff, but, for some reason or another, only 2,414 estates had been redeemed at the time when the permission was withdrawn in 1880. For a time, also, a rule was in force under which the purchaser of a permanently settled estate sold at auction was compelled to redeem the revenue at twenty-five years' purchase, if it was not more than one rupee, but the number of estates redeemed under these orders was comparatively small. This concession was not, moreover, restricted to the permanently settled estates, but under Rule XI of the Ilam Rules of 1876, the revenue on temporarily settled estates could be redeemed at twenty-five years' purchase, provided that it was not more than one rupee per annum.

The hill tracts.

The ranges which project from the Tippera Hills into the Sylhet plain have been a fruitful source of litigation between Government and the zamindars. The names of these ranges and their estimated area is shewn in the statement in the margin, the order given being that from west to east. At the time of the permanent settlement these hills were for the most part covered with forest, bamboos, and scrub, in which the

Ranges	Area. sq. miles.
Raghunandan ..	61
Satgaon ..	106
Balisira ..	115
Bhanugach and Ita ..	58+50
Langla ..	81
Pathariya ..	47
Pratapgarh ..	359
Siddheswar ..	115
Total ..	992

Tipperas would clear a patch of land, cultivate it for a few years, and then move on leaving their fields to relapse once more into the jungle from which they had originally been evolved. Certain rights of commonage are also said to have been enjoyed by the owners of the estates lying near the foot of the hills. These rights, which are known as *jhum*, a term which presumably implied the right to practise shifting cultivation in the hills, or possibly to tax plains men so practising it; *tippera*, or the right to levy a tax on Tippera villages; and *gurkati*, or the right to take or tax forest produce, are sometimes mentioned in the early records found in the collectorate as appertaining to certain permanently settled estates, and as having been assets which were taken into account when the revenue was orginally fixed. There is also a fourth easement known as *panisikka*, but the very meaning of this term is lost, and, apart from the vexed question of the actual locality in which this right was to be exercised, no one at the present day has the very least idea what the privileges were which it conferred.

The Balisira case.

When it was found that the hill ranges possessed a special value of their own, in that they were excellently adapted for the cultivation of the tea plant, claims were, from time to time, put forward, to hold the land over which these easements had been assigned, as an integral part of a permanently settled estate. One of the most important of these claims is one which is known as the Balisira case, and which arose out of the action of the Maharaja of Hill Tippera, who, in 1882, entered into an agreement to lease 30,000 acres of land in the Balisira hills to

Messrs. Finlay, Muir & Co. The Maharaja was the proprietor of certain permanently settled estates in the Balisira pargana, to which these curious easement rights attached; but there were 75 other estates in the same pargana which were in much the same condition, and Government denied that either the Maharaja or any other person was entitled to proprietary rights in the Balisira hills. In 1886, Government brought a civil suit against the Maharaja to establish their title to the 30,000 acres which formed the subject-matter of the suit; but the case was never tried, and, in 1897, the matter was finally compromised, and the Maharaja withdrew his claims to ownership.

The question of easements settled by Jhum Regulation.

Difficulty was also experienced in giving leases to tea planters for land over which other persons exercised vague rights of commonage. A Regulation, known as the Jhum Regulation, was accordingly passed in 1891, extinguishing these claims, but providing for the payment of compensation to any persons who could show that they had legally exercised these rights within the twelve years preceding the passing of the Regulation. This measure in no way affected the interests of persons who could show that any portion of the hills had been actually included within the limits of their permanently settled estates, but the High Court have distinctly laid down that the possession of these easements is not in itself evidence that land over which they were to be exercised was permanently settled with the easement holders.*

* Maulavi Muhammed Ali Amjad Khan v Secretary of State for India. Judgment delivered on March 29th, 1904.

Temporarily settled estates.

The temporarily settled estates are divided into the following classes :—

(1) *Ilam.*—This is by far the largest class. A history of the *ilam* settlements is given in the following paragraphs.

(2) *Nankar patwarigiri, i.e.*, land formerly held free of revenue by the pargana patwaris as *nankar, i.e.*, in lieu of salary. The patwaris were abolished in 1838 and the lands brought under assessment.

(3) *Charbharat,* i.e., *alluvial accretions.*—These, in Sylhet, are liable to assessment, but settlement must be offered to the owner of the property to which the lands are an accretion.

(4) *Bilbharat, i.e.*, silted up beds of *bils* which were excluded from the permanent settlement because they were then useless.

(5) *Izad, i.e.*, surplus lands discovered after the permanent settlement (but not formally proclaimed as the *ilam* lands were), and thus not included in it.

(6) Revenue free land resumed because found to be held on invalid titles.

(7) *Khas, i.e.*, permanently settled estates bought in by Government at sales for arrears of revenue and settled temporarily direct with the cultivators.

Ilam lands. Meaning of term and settlements.

Theoretically the *ilam* estates are the lands which were included in the patwaris' returns in 1802, but were not settled under *halabadi pattas* prior to 1807. They are scattered all over the district, and in some parganas there are only two or three, and in many less than one hundred *bighas* of cultivated *ilam* land. Some of the estates consist of a small tank, or a few yards of cow path embedded in the middle of a permanently settled tract, and there are no less than 365 separate plots of *ilam* land embedded in permanently settled estates which have an area of less than five acres. The *ilam* lands were first measured up between 1829 and 1834, the total area reported being 229,950 acres. The first settlement was made in 1836 and was for ten years. All cultivated land was settled with the actual occupant, and on the expiry of the lease it was renewed at the same rates of revenue.

Ilam settlement of 1871.

In 1871, steps were taken to effect a settlement in a more regular and detailed manner, and definite rules were laid down in 1876 for the guidance of the officers concerned. Cultivated and culturable uncultivated land were to be assessed at moderate rates, with reference to the rents paid by cultivators for similar land in the neighbourhood. From this assessment 15 per cent. was to be deducted, for expenses and risks of collection, and the remainder was taken to represent the Government revenue. Culturable uncultivated land in excess of one-fifth of the cultivated area was ordinarily to be excluded from settlement; but this provision was not enforced in the case of tea planters who had purchased

ilam leases, as it was recognised that a large proportion of a tea estate must of necessity remain uncropped. They were, however, required to pay revenue on all land under cultivation at the time of resettlement, and for waste equal to one-fifth of the cultivated area, at the same rates as those paid by cultivators for similar lands in the immediate neighbourhood. On the remaining waste the rates laid down in the 30 years lease rules of 1876 were imposed. Leases granted on these terms are described as leases issued under the modified *ilam* rules 1878, but all of them have now expired.

The classification adopted at the settlement begun in 1871 was needlessly elaborate. Cultivated land was divided into fourteen classes and uncultivated land into ten. There were for instance separate classes for homestead, for land adjoining the homestead on which bamboos were grown, for land on which betel or pan was grown, and for orchards or gardens. The maximum rates were actually as high as Rs. 8-4 an acre for sugarcane, and, whereas at the former settlement the average rate per acre of cultivated land was 11 annas 2 pie, it was now raised to nearly Rs. 1-12. The total area settled under the *ilam* and modified *ilam* rules, the *jangalburi* * and other similar rules, and the waste land rules of 1876, was 144,185 acres, of which 21,802 acres were cultivated. But even on the completion of this settlement there was still a considerable area of

* The *jangalburi* rules were issued by the Government of Bengal in 1864. Land could be granted under these rules for the cultivation of ordinary staples as well as of special crops at low but progressive rates of revenue.

waste land in the district which no one was willing to take up.

The Pratapgarh Tahsil.

Some reference must now be made to the land which was included in the jurisdiction of the Pratapgarh tahsil, to which, prior to the *ilam* settlement of 1896, special treatment was accorded. This tract of country lies in the valleys of the Langai and Singla in the south of the Karimganj subdivision, and consists entirely of temporarily settled land, while only a small portion of it, towards the north, was included in the *takbast* survey.* The cultivated land was settled at the same time as the other *ilam* estates in 1859, and was included in the operations carried on by Maulvi Hamid Bakht between 1875 and 1878. Prior to this settlement the rates assessed had been extremely light. The land was situated in a remote and jungly portion of the district, extensions of cultivation were probably in most cases overlooked, and, according to the Deputy Commissioner, most of the cultivators were men who had a strong objection to paying rent, and who had deliberately migrated to this somewhat unattractive valley in the hope that they might thus evade the demands either of Government or landlord.

In spite of this the settlement officer did not hesitate to apply rates, which under the circumstances must be considered very high. On homestead land he imposed a revenue ranging from Rs. 3 to Rs. 3-12 per acre, and the charge for double cropped or garden land was very

* A considerable proportion of the Pratapgarh pargana is permanently settled. The jurisdiction of the tahsildar only extended to the temporarily settled estates.

little lower. The total revenue was suddenly raised from Rs. 3,600 to Rs. 11,800, and as a natural consequence the settlement broke down. In 1878, sanction was accorded to the establishment of a tahsil in this locality, and it was determined to collect the revenue direct from the cultivators, and, if this measure succeeded, to make a direct raiyatwari settlement. The rates were reduced and a fresh settlement was made which was extended till 1893. The temporarily settled portion of the pargana was then cadastrally surveyed, and a settlement made for five years to enable the tract to be included in the area covered by the operations of the *ilam* settlement officer. The Pratapgarh tahsil was abolished in 1894 and this tract is now treated like other *ilam* land.

Further interest attaches to this pargana from the fact that certain claims, known as *baban* and *rasad baban*, are put forward by the owners of some of the permanently settled estates to easements in the Dohaliya hills. This question is of too contentious and complicated a character to be discussed in the pages of a Gazetteer, and is of little interest to the general reader. Those concerned will find further information on this subject in a note by Mr. Cossins, C.S., dated June 25th, 1890.

The Ilam settlement of 1896.

The area included in the *ilam* settlement of 1896 fell into two broad classes, high land where the staple crop is *sail* or transplanted paddy, and low land on which *aman* is grown and which is liable to flood. These two main classes were again subdivided into better and worse, and the country was thus formed into four assessment classes or circles. Land was divided into homestead, rice land,

land growing other crops than rice, and waste; and in each circle there were two grades for each kind of land, except for rice for which there were three. There were thus 12 classes of rice land, and 8 classes of homestead, other crops, and waste. The rates assessed per acre varied from Rs. 2-10 to As. 15 for homestead, Rs. 2-7 to As. 9 for rice, Re. 1-11 to As. 9 for other crops, and from As. 6 to As. 1-6 for waste. The net result of the operations was that the revenue was raised from Rs. 1,17,785 to Rs. 1,66,112, an increase of Rs. 48,327. Only Rs. 17,258 of this increase was due to enhancement, and the remainder represented the revenue assessed on land which had been newly taken up.

Area of temporarily settled estates outside Jaintia.

The following statement which has been taken from the report submitted by the *ilam* settlement officer in 1903 shows the temporarily settled area of the district outside the Jaintia Parganas:—

Class of estates.	Acres.
1. Modified *ilam*	23,713
2. Ordinary "	108,350
3. *Khas* estates	71,724
4. Raiyatwari tract of Pratapgarh	22,595
5. Resumed old rule grant	3,564
6. Petty temporarily settled estates... ...	27,519
7. *Jangalburi*	7,152
8. Waste land grants	100,677
Total ...	365,294

The expressions modified and ordinary *ilam* have already been explained, and the former is now of purely academic interest as all leases issued under this tenure have expired. *Khas* land falls under two broad heads.

Part of it is what is generally known as Government waste, *i.e.*, land which is too high or too low to be well adapted for cultivation, and which has never at any time been settled with any person. Part of it is composed of permanently settled estates which have been sold for arrears of revenue and bought in by Government. When an estate defaults in this way it is brought on the revenue records of the tahsil in which it is situated and a map is made of it. It is then visited every year by an *amin* or one of the tahsil staff, and, if any one is found in occupation, an annual lease is issued to him, and the land assessed to revenue. The rates imposed are the rates sanctioned for similar *ilam* land in the neighbourhood, or if the land is not fit for cultivation, the rates assessed on waste. The tahsil staff to whom these operations were entrusted were originally allowed considerable latitude with regard to the rates they may have thought proper to assess; but from the statement in the margin, which shows the area settled on annual lease in 1903-04 in each tahsil outside the Jaintia Parganas, it appears that the total area affected was inconsiderable. It is further fairly clear that, in a densely populated district like Sylhet, permanently settled estates which have failed to obtain a bid at auction, cannot have many attractions for the cultivator.

Tahsil	Area settled on annual lease in 1903-1904. Acres.
Sadr ...	370
South Sylhet ...	2022
Habiganj ...	654
Sunamganj ...	290
Karimganj ...	242
Hakaluki ...	200

Manner in which land is at present settled.

Most of the new land which is now being taken up for the first time outside the Jaintia Parganas is situated either in the hills, where there are still a few small patches of land

suitable for rice cultivation which are called *chegs* ; or in the *haors*, or great depressions which are gradually silting up, and in which cold weather crops are grown. When an application is received the land is first surveyed, unless it has been already mapped in the course of the *ilam* settlement, and a report is submitted showing in which of the four circles laid down at the last settlement it falls. It has already been pointed out that these circles do not consist of actual tracts of country bounded by a ring fence, but there is always other *ilam* land in close vicinity to the plot applied for, which guides the settlement officer in determining the circle to which the land should be assigned. The lease when sanctioned is for ten years, and the rate assessed on culturable land is Re. 1-2 an acre in Circle I and Annas 15 in Circle II, and, in both circles, Annas 6 an acre on waste. In the *haors*, *i.e.*, Circles III and IV, the rates assessed are either Annas 6 or Annas 3 per acre. Land which is found in the possession of persons who have not formally applied for it is settled on annual lease. The area of *khas* land in each tahsil is unfortunately not known.

Settlement of new land in Jaintia.

In the Jaintia Parganas land newly taken up is assessed at the lowest rates imposed on cultivated land in that particular village. In this portion of the district there is a genuine system of fluctuating cultivation, similar to that which prevails to such a great extent in Lower and Central Assam. Low land covered with reeds is taken up and planted out with summer rice or mustard, and after the second or third year is resigned. Annual leases are generally first issued, and, if the cultivator

decides to retain the land, a periodic lease, which terminates in the same year as the current settlement, is given to him. 1,120 acres were held on annual lease in the Kanairghat tahsil in 1903-04, and 5,219 acres in the Goyainghat tahsil.

Disforestation of Langai and Singla forests.

Reference has been already made to the pressure of the people on the soil, and, to meet this very genuine demand for land, the upper valleys of the Langai and Singla, in the south of the Karimganj subdivision, which originally formed part of a reserved forest, were thrown open in 1898 and 1899. Much of the land was found to be unsuited for cultivation and the total area allotted by June 1902 was only 7,436 acres. The rates assessed were 15 annas an acre on flat and 3 annas an acre for hill land, but no revenue was charged for the first year of occupation.

The Jaintia Parganas.

The Jaintia Parganas are seventeen in number and cover an area of 484 square miles, or 310,000 acres; of which 214,500 acres are settled under one form of tenure or another, and 95,500 acres are waste. They are situated in the north-east corner of the district, and, with the exception of pargana Satbank, lie between the Surma river and the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. They originally formed part of the territories of the Jaintia Raja, but were formally annexed in 1835, as the Raja declined to surrender the persons responsible for the murder of three British subjects who were sacrificed at the shrine of Kali in 1832. The revenue of the Raja was derived from

several heads. Land revenue was paid in kind or labour, fees were levied on appointments, and tolls on ghats, bazars, and fisheries, an item which was said to bring in about Rs. 8,800 per annum. Other sources of revenue were monopolies, presents, and fines. The total income of the Raja was estimated at from Rs. 25,000 to Rs. 30,000 per annum, and to this must be added the amount required to satisfy the demands of the subordinate officers through whose hands it passed.

Early Settlements.

In 1836, a summary settlement was concluded for one year by Captain Fisher. The revenue assessed amounted to Rs. 35,988, which was believed to be a fair equivalent of the amount taken by the Jaintia Raja. In 1838, the Parganas were resettled for a term of five years, and this settlement was subsequently extended up till 1856. During this period the rates were not raised but land taken up for cultivation was assessed, so that the revenue demand, which was Rs. 38,900 at the commencement of the term, was Rs. 42,800 in 1856. The rates assessed were very low and varied from one rupee an acre for the best kind of double cropped land, to 2 annas 6 pie an acre for waste.

The Settlement of 1876.

In 1856, a settlement was made for twenty years, the revenue assessed being Rs. 54,443. The rate for the best kind of rice land was not raised, but a small enhancement was imposed on most of the other kinds of land. The next settlement showed a very great increase. The rate for homestead was raised from 14 annas 9 pie to Rs. 1-14

an acre, and cultivation was assessed at Re. 1-5 per acre instead of at rates varying from 6 annas 3 pie to one rupee. The revenue, which by 1876 had risen to Rs. 61,900 owing to extensions of cultivation, was suddenly rushed up to Rs. 1,67,542, and as a natural result the settlement broke down. After much discussion it was decided to modify the rates in the less favourably situated villages, and the gross demand was reduced to Rs. 1,23,700, but, even then, it was almost exactly double the amount which had been previously exacted.

The current settlement.

This settlement expired in March 31st, 1896, and two years later another settlement was concluded for a term of 15 years. The land was divided into four classes, homestead, rice fields, cultivation other than rice, and waste, and the villages were distributed into five different grades. The acreage rates assessed varied in the case of homestead from Rs. 2-10 to 12 annas, for rice land from Re. 1-14 to 12 annas, for land growing other crops from Re. 1-8 to 12 annas, and for waste from 6 annas to 3 annas. Land taken up for tea was assessed at Re. 1-14 for each acre under cultivation, and 6 annas an acre for waste. For the first five years of the settlement the increase in any village, whether due to enhancement of rates or extension of cultivation, was limited to 33 per cent. of the former revenue, and in the next five years to 66 per cent. The full assessment, when the enhancement exceeds 66 per cent., will only take effect in 1909. The total sanctioned assessment was Rs. 1,86,532, but the amount at first imposed was only Rs. 1,69,345.

Land taken up for tea.

Sylhet was one of the last districts in Assam to be exploited in the interests of the tea industry, and contains few estates held under the earlier rules which were framed to govern the grant of land for tea. One estate, covering an area of 1,837 acres, is held under the rules of 1854. One-fourth of the grant is exempted from assesment in perpetuity. The remaining three fourths had a revenue free period of fifteen years and were then assessed at 3 annas an acre for ten years, and at 6 annas an acre for seventy-four years more, the total period of the lease being thus ninty-nine years. Under the fee-simple rules issued in 1861, permission was accorded to the owners of lease-hold grants to convert their tenure into fee-simple by payment of twenty times the revenue at that time due. Only one grant, covering an area of 1,891 acres has, however, been redeemed. The great bulk of the tea land is held under the rules of 1876, which, after the passing of the Assam Land Revenue Regulation in 1886, were incorporated in a revised form as Section I of the Settlement Rules. The land was sold at an upset price of Re. 1 per acre, and the lease runs for thirty years. For the first two years no revenue is assessed, it is then levied at the rate of 3 annas an acre for four years, and at 6 annas for four years more. For ten years it is 8 annas, and for the last ten years of the lease Re. 1 per acre. The issue of leases under these rules has been discontinued in Sylhet, and a considerable area of tea land is held on ordinary lease. The total area settled under different forms of tenure in the district will be found in Table XIII.

Land revenue collection.

Land revenue is paid in at the headquarters of each of the subdivisions, and at the Goyainghat and Kanairghat tahsils in Jaintia. In the Jaintia Parganas the revenue from estates paying Rs. 50 or less is due in one instalment in May; other estates pay five-sixteenths of the demand in September and eleven-sixteenths in May. In case of default a notice of demand is issued, and if the amount due is not then paid up, the estate can be at once sold, without having recourse to the procedure in force in the other raiyotwari tracts of the Province, under which the land cannot be sold unless an attempt has first been made to realize the arrears by the attachment and sale of the movable property of the defaulter. The dates for payment in the rest of the district vary from April 30th to May 31st, but from estates paying more than Rs. 50, five-sixteenths of the instalment is due on September 30th. If a permanently settled estate falls into arrears, a notice is issued fixing the date of sale, which must not be less than thirty days from the date of the publication of the notice, and if the arrears are not paid up before the day fixed for the sale, it is forthwith knocked down to the highest bidder. In the case of temporarily settled estates outside the Jaintia Parganas the usual formalities of the issue of a notice of demand and the attachment of movable property must be complied with before the estate can be put up to sale.*

* It has recently (1905) been proposed to allow officers discretion to dispense with the notice of demand and to authorise the imposition of a fine not exceeding one rupee in cases of default.

Difficulty in realising revenue.

In spite of the lightness of the land revenue demand, which in 1902-03 only amounted to 6 annas 3 pie per head of population, as compared with Rs. 2-7-1 per head in Sibsagar, considerable difficulty is experienced in recovering the lawful dues of the state. Notices of demand are freely issued, and in 1902-03 orders of attachment issued on no less than 13,244 estates, though the total for the whole Province was only 15,271. The amount of arrears for which property was sold in the Province was Rs. 47,618; and of this Rs. 36,835, or more than three-fourths of the whole, was contributed by Sylhet, though the district pays less than one-seventh of the land revenue of Assam. This difficulty in collecting the revenue is largely due to the system of joint ownership which is so prevalent in the district. It has been already shown that in the permanently settled area the revenue assessed on the great majority of estates is ridiculously small, and even these petty sums are due from several individuals and interests. It is frequently the case that, either from accident or design, one of the co-sharers fails to pay his quota, and the estate is accordingly attached and put up to auction. The very lightness of the land revenue assessment on the individual is no doubt in some degree responsible for the difficulty of realization, as people are often careless about the payment of small sums; and, as far as the issue of notices of demand is concerned, the comparison between Sylhet and Assam Proper is hardly fair. In Sylhet these notices are issued automatically as soon as an estate falls into arrears, whereas in Assam they are generally

only served upon persons who are notoriously unpunctual. Many persons also whose homes are situated at some distance from headquarters save themselves the trouble of coming in to pay their revenue by waiting till the arrival of a peon with an attachment order.

Excise.

Some account has been already given of the early beginnings of excise administration in Sylhet, and of the insignificant amount of revenue obtained. In this respect the character of the district has changed but little during the last century, and, though it contains more than a third of the total population of the Province, it only contributed one-twelfth of the excise revenue in 1904.* About one-half of the revenue was obtained from ganja and two-fifths from country spirit. The greater part of the remainder was derived from opium.

Country spirit. The still.

Country spirit is manufactured by native methods and generally in what is known as the closed still. The wash is placed in a large vessel beneath which a fire is kindled. The vapour rises into the still-head and then passes by two pipes into two receivers, which are cooled by water that is allowed to run over them, and thus cause the vapour to be precipitated in the form of spirit. These tubes are so fixed to the receivers that the air cannot have access to the spirit, and, though distillation does not proceed so rapidly, the liquor produced is stronger than that obtained from the open still.

* Province Rs. 30,24,000. Sylhet Rs. 2,61,000.

Material employed.

The material employed is either the flower of the mohwa tree (*bassia latifolia*), which contains a very large proportion of sugar, or molasses and rice. Mohwa is generally used by up-country distillers, and, as the foreigners, who form a large part of the liquor-drinking population, prefer the mohwa spirit, its use is spreading amongst the Sunris who formerly preferred molasses. The following are the proportions in which these ingredients are generally mixed, mohwa 30 seers and water 60 seers; or mohwa 25 seers, molasses 5 seers, and water 60 seers; or boiled rice 20 seers, molasses 10 seers, and water 80 seers. *Susta*, the refuse wash which remains in the retort after the distillation, is sometime used in place of water. *Muli*, a substance composed of leaves, roots and spices, whose actual ingredients are not divulged by the villagers who manufacture it, is frequently added to the wash, which is put to ferment in large earthenware vessels, which, to economise space, are often sunk up to their necks in the floor of the shop. The larger vessels are cleansed before they are filled with wash by heating them with hot ashes or ropes of straw which are allowed to smoulder for some hours inside; smaller vessels are usually washed with water. Fermentation takes three or four days in summer and a week in the cold weather, and the wash is then considered to be ready for the still. The process of distillation takes about three hours. A retort of 40 gallons yields two gallons of spirit in an hour and three-quarters, three gallons in two hours and a quarter, and four gallons in three hours. The best and strongest spirit comes off first, and, in the case of a brew of 30 seers of

mohwa, the first $3\frac{1}{2}$ gallons will be classed as *phul* if they are at once drawn off from the receiver. If they are allowed to remain while two more gallons are distilled, the whole $5\frac{1}{2}$ gallons will be classed as *bangla*. The exact proportions vary, however, at the different shops, some distillers taking $4\frac{1}{4}$ gallons of *phul* or $5\frac{1}{4}$ gallons of *bangla* from 30 seers of mohwa. Occasionally only two gallons of spirit are distilled from 30 seers of mohwa, and the liquor is then called *thul*, is very strong, and is sold for one or two rupees a quart. *Thul* is also sometimes made by redistilling *bangla*. Only one kind of liquor is generally taken from each distillation, as, if the *thul* or *phul* were removed, the spirit subsequently distilled would be not only weak but impure. Strong liquor watered to reduce it to a lower strength is not considered palatable, and it seems to be the usual practice to distill the liquor at the actual strength at which it will be sold. One disadvantage of the cheaper kind of liquor is that it will not keep, and in four or five weeks it is said to lose all its spirituous qualities.

	No. of shops.	Revenue. Rs.
1873-74	... 38	7,689
1879-80	... 45	22,755
1889-90	... 66	49,746
1899-1900	... 48	1,10,555

From the statement in the margin it will be seen that of recent years there has been a considerable expansion of the revenue under the head of country spirits. This is chiefly due to the growth of the cooly population, most of whom are spirit drinkers, who increased more than fivefold, during the last twenty years of the nineteenth century. During this period, though there was a large increase in the liquor revenue, there was hardly any increase in the number of shops.

The outstill system is not theoretically the most desirable, and its justification lies in the fact that where there are such facilities for illicit distillation and for smuggling, the only system possible is one which, by providing consumers with a moderately priced and reasonably accessible supply of spirit, lessens the temptation to resort to illegal methods to procure it. The following measures have recently been introduced with the object of reducing as far as possible the evils attendant on the liquor trade. A special excise establishment has been entertained, the vendor is required to arrange for an abundant supply of good drinking water near his shop, and his license can be withdrawn if he is twice convicted of allowing drunkenness and disorderly conduct near the still.

The shops for which the highest fees were paid in 1904-05 were Sylhet town, Bhadair Deol (in Kamalganj), Sharergaj and Ramnagar, both of which are in the Matiganj outpost, and Hingajiya. Table XIV shows the number of shops in each subdivision and the revenue obtained since 1900-01. By far the largest revenue is raised in South Sylhet, where there is a large immigrant population. A considerable proportion of the natives of Sylhet are, however, spirit drinkers, as is shewn by the receipts in Sunamganj, where there are very few foreigners, and in Habiganj where their number is not large.

Pachwai.

Pachwai, or rice beer, is taken by some of the humble Hindu castes, and is largely used by garden coolies if facilities are not afforded to them for obtaining country spirit. The following is the usual system of manufacture followed.

The rice is boiled and spread on a mat, and *muli* is powdered and sprinkled over it. After about twelve hours it is transferred to an earthen jar, the mouth of which is closed, and left to ferment for three or four days. Water is then added and allowed to stand for a few hours, and the beer is at last considered to be ready. The usual proportions are—5 seers of rice and 3 chattaks of *muli* to half a *kulsi* of water, and the liquor produced is said to be much stronger than most European beers. Liquor is often illicitly distilled from pachwai or boiled rice, by the following simple method. An earthen pot, with a hole in the bottom, is placed on the top of the vessel containing the pachwai and the whole is set on the fire. The mouth of the upper pot is closed by a cone-shaped vessel filled with cold water, and a saucer is placed at the bottom of the pot over the hole. The vapour rises into the upper of the two jars, condenses against the cold cone, with which the mouth is closed, and falls in the form of spirit on to the saucer beneath. Care must of course be taken to see that the various cracks are closed against the passage of the spiritous vapour, but this can easily be done with strips of cloth.

Opium.

Opium is generally swallowed in the form of pills or mixed with water and drunk. Madak is made by mixing boiled opium with pieces of dried pan leaf, and stirring it over the fire. The compound is then rolled up into pills and smoked. Chandu is made out of opium boiled with water till the water has all evaporated, and is smoked like madak in the form of pills.

The people of Sylhet are not much addicted to the use of opium, and the receipts under this head, which were never large, show a steady tendency to decrease. In 1881 they amounted to Rs. 43,700. The maximum of recent years was reached in 1886 (Rs. 47,400) but from that date onward they gradually declined till in 1902 they had sunk to Rs. 18,800.

The number of shops in each subdivision, the quantity of opium issued, and the revenue raised under this head are shown in Table XIV. Karimganj and North Sylhet are the only parts of the district in which opium is taken in appreciable quantities. In South Sylhet there is only one shop, which sells about ten seers a year; and in Habiganj the quantity consumed is well below one maund.

Ganja.

Ganja is usually mixed with water, kneaded till it becomes soft, cut into small strips, and smoked. Wild ganja grows very freely in the hills, but it is doubtful whether it is much used except as a medicine for cattle. It does not produce such strong effects as the ganja of Rajshahi, but the leaves are sometimes dried and mixed with milk, water, and sugar to form a beverage. Sylhet has always been rather a ganja-smoking district, and in 1884 the revenue raised from this drug in Sylhet amounted to more than half the total receipts from ganja in the Province. The receipts under this head of excise have kept fairly steady, as will be seen from the statement in the margin which shows the most violent fluctuations since 1881. The number of shops in each subdivision, the quantity of ganja issued, and the revenue obtained are

	Rs. (000 omitted)
1881	.. 102
1884	.. 121
1888	.. 88
1893	.. 126
1895	.. 99
1897	.. 128

shown in Table XIV. Unlike opium, the revenue obtained from ganja is fairly evenly distributed over most parts of the district, and the difference between the subdivisional receipts is small.

Income Tax.

The receipts under the head of income tax in 1904 amounted to Rs. 53,619, or more than one-fifth of the total collections of the Province. About two-fifths of the whole were assessed on the salaries paid to garden managers and their staff; and the salaries and pensions of Government servants also yielded over Rs. 6,000. Nearly half the total amount was, however, realized under Part IV "other sources of income," and there were altogether 638 assessees under this head, or one in every 3,300 of the population. 266 of these persons were described as money-lenders, but most of these people in all probability combined money-lending with agriculture, and there were 68 assessees in the professional class, nearly all of whom were pleaders. The assessment is made in each subdivision by a Sub-Deputy Collector or Extra Assistant Commissioner, who visits the principal villages and submits his proposals for the approval of the Deputy Commissioner.

The receipts from income tax have on the whole remained fairly steady, but it is doubtful whether there has been much increase in the taxable capacities of the people. In 1888, the receipts amounted to Rs. 61,000 and the maximum was reached in 1898 with Rs. 75,700. The marked decrease which occurred in 1904, and left the income tax demand lower than at any period since Act II of 1886 became law, was due to Act XI of 1903, which raised

the minimum taxable income from Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,000 per annum. The consequence was that the assessment under Part IV was less by Rs. 10,000 in 1904 than it had been in 1888. A statement showing the receipts under this head will be found in Table XI.

Stamps.

The stamp revenue of Sylhet is large, judicial stamps yielding in 1904 Rs. 4,04,000, and non-judicial stamps Rs. 1,52,000, which in both cases was considerably more than half the total amount realized in the Province under this head of revenue. The incidence per head of population was 4 annas, as compared with 3 annas 4 pies per head in Cachar and 1 anna 11 pies in the Assam Valley. This higher incidence is chiefly due to a higher general level of inteligence. In the other districts in the plains the proportion of aboriginal tribesmen or of garden coolies is much greater than in Sylhet, and people of this class have seldom much occasion to attend our Courts. Trade, too, is more decentralized than in Assam where it is concentrated in the hands of a small and united community of Marwari merchants, who endeavour as far as possible to settle their disputes without paying fees to Government or pleaders. The potential number of litigants is thus larger than in other districts, and the complicated condition of the land tenure is a fruitful subject-matter of dispute. The receipts under the head of stamps in 1902 and subsequent years are shown in Table XI.

Public Works.

Public Works are in charge of an Executive Engineer or Assistant Engineer, who is usually assisted by four upper and three lower subordinates. The Public Works Department are

entrusted with the construction and maintenance of all the larger public buildings. The most important are the jail, the public offices, schools and post and telegraph offices at district and subdivisional headquarters, circuit houses, dâk bungalows, and inspection bungalows on provincial roads. Inspection bungalows on other roads are maintained by the Local Boards. The most important lines of communication directly under the Department are the roads from Sylhet to Companyganj and Fenchuganj, the Cachar trunk road as far as Badarpur, and the roads from Habiganj and Maulavi Bazar to the railway stations at Saistaganj and Shamshernagar. Since 1897, a large outlay has been incurred by the Department on the reconstruction of the Deputy Commissioner's and Judge's courts and the district jail. It has already been explained that Local Board works that require professional skill or engineering knowledge are usually made over to the Executive Engineer for execution.

Government.

For general administrative purposes the district is divided into five subdivisions. North Sylhet is under the immediate charge of the Deputy Commissioner, Karimganj and South Sylhet are entrusted to assistant magistrates who are almost invariably Europeans, and Habiganj and Sunamganj to magistrates who are usually natives of India. The Deputy Commissioner is allowed four subordinate magistrates and three Sub-Deputy Collectors as his assistants at headquarters, and a second magistrate is usually posted at each of the subdivisional stations,

except at Habiganj where there are generally two magistrates in addition to the Subdivisional Officer. The total number of clerks employed under the Deputy Commissioner's orders in 1903 was 181 and they drew altogether from Government nearly Rs. 74,000 in salaries.

Administrative subdivisions.

In spite of the fact that the district covered an area of nearly 5,500 square miles, a considerable part of which was very densely peopled, Sylhet remained for more than a century under British rule before any attempt was made to decentralize the administration. The question was first mooted in 1860, and it was then admitted that a million and three quarters of human beings could not be adequately governed if all the courts and all the superior officers engaged in the administration were located at one place. Sylhet, the capital of the district, was, moreover, somewhat inaccessible. There were, at that time, hardly any roads, and the difficulties of communication in the cold weather must have been very great; while even in the rainy season access could only be obtained to the court of the Deputy Commissioner from some portions of the district after a long and tortuous voyage. In 1867, the district was subdivided by notification in the Gazette, into four minor units, *i.e.*, Sunamganj, Karimganj, Habiganj, and what now corresponds to, North and South Sylhet, but no less than ten years passed before effect was given to this order; want of money being for some time an insuperable obstacle. The first subdivision was opened at Sunamganj in January 1877, and there was evidently,

even at that time, considerable financial stringency, as the Subdivisional Officer elect, who was a European, was informed that he could build himself a cutcherry and a comfortable dwelling house for at most Rs. 2,000 ! The sanctioned subdivisional establishment both here and at Habiganj and Karimganj, which were opened in the following year, were one Sheristadar on Rs. 50 per mensem, one clerk on Rs. 30 per mensem, four clerks on Rs. 20 per mensem, a potdar and a daftri each on Rs. 6 per mensem, and a chaprasi on Rs. 5. Subsequently it was found that the *sadr* subdivision was too large, and in 1882 a fifth subdivision was opened at Maulavi Bazar. The area and population of each subdivision is shewn in the statement in the margin.

	Area in square. Miles.	Population. 1901.
Sunamganj	1,493	433,752
North sylhet	1,055	463,477
Karimganj	1,048	410,460
south sylhet	840	379.158
Habiganj	999	555,001

The smaller unit of administration is the thana, of which there are 16. The area and population of each thana is shewn in Table II.

Criminal and Civil Justice.

Appeals lie to the Deputy Commissioner from the decisions of magistrates of the second or third class, but the duty of hearing these appeals is sometimes delegated to the Subdivisional Officers of Karimganj, South Sylhet, and Habiganj, and to the senior assistant magistrate at *sadr*, who are specially empowered in this behalf. Appeals from first class magistrates lie to the District and Sessions Judge, who is subordinate to the High Court of Fort William at Calcutta. In 1902, there were 16 stipendiary and 2 honorary magistrates in the district and two benches of

magistrates. These magistrates decided altogether 4,455 cases in the course of which 21,594 witnesses were examined. Altogether 5,634 cases under the Penal Code were returned as true, about four-fifths of which were either offences against property or against the human body.

Prevalence of agrarian riots.

In the chapter on the history of the district, reference has been already made to the unruly character of the inhabitants, and to the prevalence of river dacoity and agrarian riots in the early days of British rule. Unfortunately these characteristics still persist, and there is a marked tendency even at the present day to settle disputes arising out of the complicated land tenure by appeals to force. The matter is generally brought to a head by one party resisting the attempt of their opponents to seize the land or crops, and a curious case occurred in 1882 in which some villagers in the Jaintia Parganas deliberately decided to submit their claims to an ordeal by combat. The day and hour were fixed, and, in the course of the fight, two men were killed and many wounded. A few months later a date was fixed for a similar encounter, but on this occasion the police were informed of the intentions of the parties and intervened to prevent a breach of the peace.

These riots, as a rule, take place between the disputants for the land, but in 1900 the police themselves were attacked at Bhanubhil, near Kamalganj in the south of South Sylhet. Relations between the zamindar and his raiyats, most of whom were Manipuris, had for some time been strained, and a police guard was posted at the

zamindar's cutcherry to preserve the peace. On October 10th, two constables, two village chaukidars, and four zamindari peons who had been sent to enquire into the fate of a missing man, were seized by the villagers and severely beaten. Some of the accused persons absconded, and on October 17th a party of eight policemen, accompanied by three elephants belonging to the zamindar and about one hundred of his men, proceeded to the villages to arrest the guilty persons. On their arrival, they were confronted by a crowd of over a thousand people; and the head constable, who dismounted from his elephant to address the leaders of the mob, was assaulted with a club. The armed police fired their guns into the air, the zamindar's men fled, and the victorious villagers killed a mohurrir of the zamindar's cutcherry, mortally wounded another man, seriously injured seven of the police, and severely beat a number of other persons. The High Court subsequently confirmed the conviction of eleven of the men concerned in the two riots, and imposed sentences of imprisonment varying from seven to two years. Abidabad, Nabiganj, Dirai, Badla, and Astagram have an unenviable reputation for river dacoity.

Murders.

The average number of murders and culpable homicides annually reported during the ten years ending with 1889 was 24. In the next decade the average rose to 31, and during the past four years (1900-03) the average was 40. The largest number of cases occurred in 1901, when there were 48, or 1 to every 46,700 persons. This was nearly three times the rate prevailing in the Province of Bengal

during that year, but is considerably lower than the rate for Lakhimpur in 1897, when there was one case for every 19,500 persons.

Most of these murders are due to quarrels about women, and not unfrequently the victim is a luckless wife, who, rightly or wrongly, is thought to be unfaithful. The great majority of these crimes are of a senseless and savage character, and the circumstances under which they are committed suggest that the murderer at the time was utterly bereft of sense. A typical case is one reported in 1882. A man abused his wife for neglecting to prepare his evening meal. The woman brooded over her wrongs, and when her husband composed himself to sleep, suddenly seized a *dao* and cut him about the head. She then murdered her infant child, and finished by cutting her own throat. The husband ultimately recovered, but two lives were sacrificed to a petty squabble about uncooked rice. A much more deliberate murder was committed in the following year by a party of Manipuris. A Muhammadan agent of a zamindar in the Muchikandi thana enticed away the wife of a Manipuri Brahman, and declined to give her up when called upon to do. Instead of applying to the magistrate for redress, the Manipuris held a panchayat, and decided that the Muhammadan should be killed as a punishment for seducing or at any rate harbouring a Brahman woman.* On the following morning, some two or three hundred of these people went to the zamindar's cutcherry, on

* In Manipur itself Manipuri women are extraordinarily lax, and adultery is looked upon as a venial fault and is often winked at by the husband.

pretence of having business with the agent. They succeeded in securing two guns which were in the office, and then arrested the object of their vengeance. He was carried out to the market place, mutilated in a horrible manner, and deliberately beaten to death in the presence of the people. The Manipuris then sent for two chaukidars, made over the body of the murdered man to one and his guns and property to the other, and called on them to bear witness that vengeance and not robbery had been their motive. It is satisfactory to know that for this cold-blooded murder and defiance of the law, one man was hung and thirty-three transported for life.

In 1900, a family murder was committed under very curious circumstances. A villager named Bir Singh, was so depressed at the death of his wife, and at the loss of a considerable sum of money which she had buried in a spot which she was unable to disclose before she died, that he determined to put an end to his own life and that of all his children. He accordingly sent away his sister who was mothering the orphaned baby, and arranged his children, who were aged seven, five and two-and-a-half years respectively, in a line, one behind another on the floor. He then sat down in front with the infant slung round his neck, placed the muzzle of his gun at his own heart and pressed the trigger with his toe. The result was the instantaneous death of himself and the two children sitting just behind, but though the bullet lodged in the body of the third child it was too spent to kill her. The infant alone escaped unhurt.

Civil Justice.

Civil justice is administered by the District Judge assisted by two subordinate judges and ten munsifs. Prior to 1896, there was only one subordinate judge, but an additional officer in that grade was sanctioned in that year as a temporary measure, and he was made permanent in 1903.

In 1902, the District Judge decided 12 original cases and 78 appeals, the subordinate judges 498 original cases and 447 appeals, and the munsifs 19,236 cases; but out of the total number of cases disposed of in all courts only 3,554 were actually contested. In round figures these civil suits were classified as follows:—Money suits 12,000, rent suits 4,000, title suits 3,000. From the pecuniary point of view they cannot be described as of much importance as two-thirds of the total number were valued at Rs. 50 or less.

Registration.

Sylhet is the only district in the Province in which there is much registration work. The Deputy Commissioner is District Registrar. Special sub-registrars are entertained at the district and subdivisional headquarters and rural sub-registrars at Balaganj, Kanairghat, Jagannathpur, Madhabpur, Jaldhub, Hingajiya, Patharkandi, and Baniyachung. The total number of documents registered in 1903 was 41,500.

Police.

The Civil Police are in charge of a District or Assistant Superintendent of Police. The sanctioned strength consists of 6 inspectors, 63 sub-inspectors, and 562 head constables and

constables. 213 smooth-bore Martinis are allotted to Sylhet and a reserve of men is kept up at the district and sub-divisional headquarters who are armed with these weapons and are employed on guard and escort duty. Up-country men, Nepalese, and members of the aboriginal tribes are usually deputed to this work, though attempts are made to put all the constables through an annual course of musketry.

In addition to their regular duties in connection with the prevention and detection of crime, the police are required to check the returns of vital statistics, enquire into cases in which death has not been due to natural causes, furnish guards and escorts, and serve all processes in warrant cases.

The district is divided into 31 investigating centres. The names of these stations and the number of men stationed at each centre will be found in Table XVIII.

The Chaukidars.

There does not appear to have been anything in the shape of a village community in Sylhet in the days of native rule, and there was at that time no village officer corresponding to the chaukidar. Chaukidars were apparently first appointed some time between 1818 and 1838, and in a report submitted in the latter year, they are referred to as a standing institution.*

No attempt seems to have been made to settle the boundaries of the village beats, and there does not appear to have been any efficient machinery for the realization of

* Magistrate's letter No. 263, dated April 1838, to Superintendent of Police.

the village policeman's pay. The natural result was that the force, if force it could be called, was in a very unsatisfactory state. In 1840, the Magistrate complained that the chaukidars could not be made the really efficient branch of the police force they were capable of becoming, until they were constituted the servants of Government and not of the village community.* In 1865, it was said that nothing could be worse than the condition of the rural police, who did not on the average receive more than Re. 1 per mensem. The whole question was taken up by Mr. Luttman-Johnson when he assumed charge of the district in 1878, and, on his representation, Regulation I of 1883 was passed, to regularize and legalize the position of the village watch. Under this regulation the chaukidar may be paid in kind as well as in cash, he is left to make his own arrangements with the villagers as to the amount of pay he is to draw, and under ordinary circumstances he collects his salary himself. In cases of recalcitrancy the assistance of the magistrate can be invoked, and it is within the discretion of the Deputy Commissioner to appoint a panchayat to represent the villagers if he considers it desirable to do so.

In 1896, Mr. O'Brien, the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet, who was acting as Inspector-General of Police, reported that the regulation of 1883 had not worked satisfactorily in practice. The chaukidar, if he received his pay at all, neither received it regularly nor in full, he was entirely dependant on his fellow villagers, and

* Magistrate's No. 338, dated 13th April 1840, to Superintendent of Police.

was their instrument and tool and not a servant of the State. Act VI (B. C.) of 1870, was accordingly introduced in North Sylhet in 1898, and has since (1905) been extended to every part of the district. Under this Act the salary of the chaukidar is collected by a panchayat appointed for this purpose. It is then handed over to an officer, who, as a matter of fact, is usually the police officer in charge of the circle, by whom it is made over to the chaukidar. This system tends to improve the condition of the village watch by securing the regular payment of their wages, and at the same time places them more under the control of the police department. The total number of chaukidars employed in Sylhet in 1904 was 5,158, who were entertained at a cost of Rs. 2,67,000.

Volunteering.

A Volunteer Corps was first enrolled in Sylhet in 1880 with a strength of 42 members, but was subsequently amalgamated with the Cachar volunteers to form the Surma Valley Light Horse. This admirable corps had a total strength in 1904 of 334 men, 178 of whom were residing in Sylhet.

The Sylhet Jail.

The Sylhet Jail, which was reconstructed after the earthquake of 1897 at a cost of Rs. 1,86,000, is the largest and best ordered institution of that kind in the Province. The premises, which cover an area of 7·2 acres, are surrounded by a brick wall, and on one side there is a large garden enclosed by a bamboo palisade. The

principal sleeping wards, which are ten in number, are erected on high masonry plinths, the uprights are of iron, and the roof is made of corrugated sheets of the same metal. The walls are of whole bamboos, covered with bamboo shutters which can be raised or lowered at will; and the wards are thus warm in winter while in summer they are airy and cool. Two of the wards are fitted with wire cubicles which can accommodate 186 prisoners and have been erected at a cost of Rs. 20,000. The number of persons who can be accommodated in the jail is shewn in the statement in the margin.

	M.	F.
Convicts ..	529	15
Under-trial ..	40	5
Hospital ..	56	2
Civil prisoners ..	5	0
Observation cells ..	6	0
Total ..	636	22

The water-supply is drawn from masonry wells, to one of which filtering beds and arrangements for boiling the water are attached, the total cost of the whole being over Rs. 6,000.

Jail manufactures.

The prisoners are employed on gardening, weaving, carpentering, the manufacture of basket-work furniture and sieves, soorki-pounding, and oil-pressing. Bread and soda water are also manufactured in the jail. The cash earnings of the prisoners in 1903 were said to amount to Rs. 3,561, but this takes no account of the value of goods supplied to other jails, or of raw materials and manufactured articles in store.

Health of Jail.

The following statement shows the number of deaths that has occurred in each year since 1883, in which the total number

of casualties exceeded ten, and the death-rate per mille on the daily average strength of convicts.

Year.	Daily average strength.	No. of deaths.	Death-rate per mille on the daily average strength.
1883	265	14	53
1884	214	17	79
1885	223	21	94
1886	177	22	124
1889	180	21	116
1891	139	28	201
1894	529	24	45
1895	479	39	81
1896	510	32	63
1897	533	21	39
1898	521	18	35
1899	512	32	63
1900	476	12	25
1901	509	17	33
1902	426	14	33

Between 1881 and 1892, it was the practice to house bodies of prisoners in temporary jails during the cold weather, and employ them on road construction under the Public Works Department. It was thought that change of scene and employment in the open would have a good effect upon their health, and after the system had been placed upon a proper footing this proved to be the case. At first there was some mortality due to the consumption of impure food and water while at work, and to over-exposure, but these defects were soon remedied. The prisoners were supplied with filtered water, prevented from obtaining unwholsome food, and on their return from work were provided with dry and warm clothing, with the result that, except for occasional outbreaks of cholera, the health in these jails was exceptionally good. The effect upon the statistics of

the Sylhet Jail was, however, very striking. Only the weakly prisoners were retained at *sadr*, and men whose health began to fail were sent back from the temporary jails, in some cases to recover, but in some to die. The enormous death-rate shown against 1891 appears to be an instance of the misleading character of statistics when improperly employed. No less than 20 of the 28 deaths occurred amongst prisoners who had returned from the Lushai Hills temporary jail. This temporary jail had a daily average population of 364 in the cold weather, but not a single death was debited against it. There was also a large temporary jail at Telikhal, which was chiefly manned by prisoners from Sylhet, and both of these two jails were omitted when calcultaing the average daily population and death-rate of the *sadr* jail. Even apart from this statistical confusion it must be admitted that the death-rate was occasionally most lamentably high. In 1895, the actual death-rate amounted to 81 per mille, which was characterised by the Chief Commissioner as appalling, and led to the issue of stringent regulation for the protection of the convicts when employed on extramural labour. In the following year, the death-rate was again high, and the Inspector-General of Jails came to the conclusion that too much regard had been paid to economy by those in charge, and directed that rations should be issued on a more liberal scale. Since that date the health of the jail has been fairly good, except in 1899 when there was a death-rate of 63 per mille. This high death-rate was partly attributed to overcrowding and to the insanitary character of the sheds in which the

prisoners were housed while the jail was under reconstruction, and partly to the prevalence of a peculiarly malignant form of malarial fever in the town. The arrangements in the jail are now quite admirable, and of recent years the death-rate has been low.

The Subdivisional Jails.

At the headquarters of each subdivision there is a jail in which male convicts are allowed to be detained for three months, and female convicts for one. Persons sentenced to a longer term of imprisonment are transferred to the jail at Sylhet. The wards are constructed on high mud plinths, and have iron posts and roofs and bamboo walls, and are situated in an enclosure surrounded by a bamboo palisade. The statement in the margin shows the area of the premises and the number of prisoners for whom accommodation is provided. The prisoners are usually employed on gardening or cleaning the drains and repairing the roads of the town; and, inside the jail, are sometimes put to paddy husking and the mustard oil mill. Table XIX shows the population, the mortality, and the financial results of each jail in 1881, 1891, and 1901.

	No. of prisoners who can be accommodated.	Area. Acres.
Sunamganj ...	54	·37
Habiganj ...	54	·41
Maulavi Bazar...	32	·33
Karimganj ...	35	·23

Education.

In the days of native rule there were a large number of village schools, in the district, where children were taught to read by the local Pundit or Maulavi and were instructed in the mysteries of Sanskrit or the Koran. For many

years after our occupation of the country, these indigenous and unaided schools were the only ones the people had, and education on the English system is a plant of comparatively recent growth. In 1867, or less than forty years ago, there were only 28 schools and 1,127 scholars in the district. * Nearly half of these children were living in Sylhet town, so that amongst the millions in the mofussil, education on the English system might be said to be almost non-existent. The following abstract shows the development of education since 1874 ; and how the 1,100 pupils of 1867 had increased to nearly 40,000 in 1901. The figures for later years will be found in the appendix (Tables XX).

Years.	Number of secondary schools.	Pupils.	Number of primary schools.	Pupils.	Total No. of pupils.	Number of persons in district to each pupil.	Percentage under instruction to those of school-going age.	
							Males.	Females.
1874-75	27	1,608	195	5,218	6,826	252	...	...
1880-81	31	2,654	285	8,829	11,483	171	7·32	0·09
1890-91	44	4,424	695	22,342	26,766	81	15·35	1·03
1900-01	68	5,701	1,017	33,809	39,510	57	21·39	2·24

Higher education. High schools are those institutions which are recognised by the Calcutta University as capable of affording suitable preparation for the Entrance Examination. The boys are taught from the earliest stage of their education up to the En-

* Principal Heads of the History and Statistics of the Dacca Division, page 326.

trance course as prescribed by the University of Calcutta, but many leave school without completing the course. Till recently English was taught in all the classes. The smaller boys no longer learn that language, but the standard of instruction is higher than that prevailing in lower secondary (middle) schools. English is the medium of instruction in the first four classes of high schools; in the lower classes and in other schools the vernacular is employed. The course of instruction at middle English and middle vernacular schools is the same, with the exception that English is taught in the former and not in the latter. The following are the subjects taught in the middle vernacular course :—(1) Bengali comprising literature, grammar, and composition, (2) History of India, (3) Geography, (4) Arithmetic, (5) Elements of Euclid (Book I), mensuration of plane surfaces and surveying, and (6) simple lessons on botany and agriculture.

Primary education.

Primary education is again divided into upper and lower, but the proportion of boys in upper primary schools is less than six per cent. of the total number, and this class of school, like the middle vernacular, is slowly dying out. The course of study in lower primary schools includes reading, writing, dictation, simple arithmetic, and the geography of Assam. In Upper Primary schools the course is somewhat more advanced, and includes part of the first book of Euclid, mensuration and a little history. The standard of instruction given still

leaves much to be desired, but efforts have been recently made to improve it, by raising the rates of pay given to the masters. Fixed pay is now awarded at average rates of Rs. 8 per mensem for certificated and Rs. 5 per mensem for uncertificated teachers, supplemented by capitation grants at rates ranging from 3 annas to 6 annas for pupils in the three highest classes.

Sites of College and principal schools.

Sylhet is fairly well supplied with secondary schools. The Murarichand second grade unaided College in Sylhet town was founded by Raja Girish Chandra Roy in 1892 and is supported by that gentleman. There is a Government high school at Sylhet, aided high schools at Habiganj, Sunamganj, Maulavi Bazar, and Karimganj, and unaided high schools at Sylhet and Baniyachung. There are also one Government, 40 aided and 4 unaided middle English schools, and 14 schools which are classified as middle vernacular. A list of these schools will be found in the Appendix. In 1901, the proportion of literate males was 81 per mille, which was higher than that in any district of the Province, with the exception of the Cachar Plains. Female education has made very little progress, and only four women in every thousand were returned as literate at the last census.

Medical. General sanitary conditions of the district.

The district is in the medical charge of the Civil Surgeon who is stationed at Sylhet. It contains 43 dispensaries, and the supervision of the work done at these institutions is one of the most important of his duties. He

also acts as Superintendent of the Jail and Leper Asylum, he controls and inspects the vaccination department, and is required to visit and report on all tea gardens on which the death-rate for the previous year has exceeded 7 per cent.

Absence of rural sanitation.

The conditions under which the majority of the people pass their days are far from conducive to a long term of life. Their houses are small, dark, and ill-ventilated, and the rooms in summer must be exceedingly close and oppressive. They are built upon mud plinths, and are in consequence extremely damp, and the poorer people, instead of sleeping on beds or bamboo platforms which would cost but little to provide, often pass the night on a mat on the cold floor. The houses are buried in groves of fruit trees and bamboos, which afford indeed a pleasant shade but act as an effective barrier to the circulation of the air, and increase the humidity of the already over humid atmosphere.* Sanitary arrangements there are none, the rubbish is swept up into a corner and allowed to rot with masses of decaying vegetation, and the complete absence of latrines renders the neighbourhood of the village a most unsavoury place. The water-supply is usually bad and is drawn either from rivers, or from tanks in which the villagers wash their clothes and persons. Hindus are generally burnt upon the river bank, and the mattress on which the corpse was carried to the pyre is left to rot upon the ground, to be carried off in the next flood

* The Civil Surgeon has found that excellent results have attended the clearance of bamboo jungle in places where fever has been particularly bad.

with all the germs of disease it may contain. In the cold weather the carcases of dead cattle are thrown into the river, and the Civil Surgeon has seen more than sixty in a single trip from Karimganj to Fenchuganj. These masses of decaying matter often drift into back eddies, where they thoroughly pollute water which is often subsequently used for all domestic purposes. All of these are undoubtedly factors which contribute to produce a high mortality, and nearly every one of them could be eliminated.

Vital Statistics.

Vital occurrences are reported verbally by the village chaukidars to the police, but the accuracy of the statistics leaves much to be desired. In 1902, enquiries were made by the testing staff with regard to 34,000 births and deaths, and it was found that 6 per cent. of them had been omitted from the registers. The mean recorded birth-rate for the decade, 1891-1901, was 34, and the death-rate 33 per mille.

Principal diseases: Fever.

The diseases which are most common in the district are fevers of various kinds, small-pox, chicken-pox, measles, cholera, dysentery and diarrhœa, skin diseases, and worms. Enteric and gastric fevers, dengue, and diptheria are seldom met with. Fevers are divided into three main classes: intermittent fever with ague, remittent fever which generally lasts some fifteen days with a long and tedious convalescence, and *kala azar*, which is here known as *pet mota* or *mulki pira*. *Kala azar* has been prevalent for many years in the Brahmaputra Valley and has produced the most appalling mortality in the Garo Hills and in Lower and Central

Assam, but till comparatively recently it was thought that Sylhet was free from the disease.

In 1897, after the great earthquake, malarial fevers became extremely common, and some of them assumed a malignant and fatal type which was not amenable to ordinary treatment. The people themselves looked upon this fever as a new disease, and after some enquiry the Medical Department came to the conclusion that it was probably identical with the dreaded *kala azar* of Assam. Their uncertainty was due to the fact that it is difficult to distinguish between *kala azar* and ordinary malarial fever, the principal points of difference being the ease with which it can be communicated from the sick to the healthy, the extreme condition of cachexia which is rapidly induced, and the small proportion of recoveries. As to the exact nature of the disease the medical profession is still in doubt: as to the appalling effects it can produce there is unfortunately no question.

The fever in Sylhet is of a remittent type, the spleen and liver are enlarged, the complexion is of a leaden hue, and there is considerable wasting of the muscles. The disease is not so widespread or of such a fatal type as the form that is found in the Brahmaputra Valley, but it is said to be intensely prevalent in some portions of the district. The mortality in 1897 was very high in Sylhet, but that year was an exceptionally unhealthy one in every part of the Province, and since that date the health of the district has been fairly good. Serious outbreaks of fever also occurred in 1879, and again in 1884 and 1885. For the present at any rate, the North

and South Sylhet subdivisions appear to be the most feverish portions of the district. The inhabitants of Habiganj and Sunamganj enjoy better health, possibly because almost the whole of the country goes under water in the rains.

Cholera and other diseases.

Cholera appears every year in the Habiganj, Sunamganj, and North Sylhet subdivisions and is a regular visitor to the police stations of Jagannathpur, Dirai, Baniyachung, Nabiganj, and Biswanath. The disease is generally most severe in the autumn when the floods are drying up, and its dissemination is assisted by the careless habits of the people and the reckless way in which they allow their drinking water to be polluted. On the outbreak of an epidemic, native doctors are sent amongst the people, and efforts are made to prevent the villagers from flinging carcases and dead bodies into the *haors* and rivers. The district is, however, fairly free from cholera. Only four times in the last twenty years has the recorded death-rate from this disease exceeded 4 per mille, and not once has it been as high as 5 per mille, but in 1870 there was such a violent outburst of this dreadful epidemic that the Magistrate closed the courts for 17 days. Small-pox of course exists, but the mortality is far from high, and virulent outbreaks are not so common as in other parts of the Province. It is perhaps on this account that the inhabitants seem a little indifferent to the advantages of vaccination. In the five years ending with 1902-03, only 34 per mille were on the average annually protected as compared with 44 per mille in the Province as a whole. Skin diseases

are very prevalent and so are worms, the uncleanly habits of the people rendering the dissemination of the ova a very simple matter. The parasites most generally found are the round worm, the tape-worm, the whip-worm, and the *anchylostomum duodenale*. Goitre and elephantiasis are very rare, but venereal diseases are said to be fairly common.

Native midwifery.

The native methods of midwifery leave much to be desired. The old Hindu Ayurvedic system seems to have prescribed a fairly reasonable treatment. The hut in which the patient was confined was to be newly erected for the occasion, fairly spacious, well ventilated and dry; the bedding was to be clean, and the attendants were required to cut their nails and wear clean clothing. After delivery the mother was to be carefully tended, and protected from anything likely to retard recovery till her health was properly restored. In the case of unnatural presentations the infant should be thrust back into the uterus and turned if possible, and when this proved to be impracticable, it was dismembered and brought out in pieces.

At the present day the practice of erecting a new hut is often disregarded, and, where one is built, it is generally of the most unsanitary description; but in many families a dark and ill-ventilated room which is attached to the main house is specially reserved for lying in. The patient is attended by low caste widows who are ignorant and uncleanly. In a natural and easy labour they have not much opportunity of doing harm, but where delivery is retarded, they often do much injury

alike to mother and to child. They generally endeavour to induce the premature expulsion of the placenta and thus cause hæmorrhage which is sometimes fatal. The mortality of mothers in child-birth is said to be considerable. The zenana system is supposed to have a prejudicial effect upon female health, early marriage is common, little girls become mothers before they are fitted to support the strain, and the shock of parturition not unfrequently is fatal to a constitution already weakened by malaria. Septicæmia is often caused by the uncleanliness of the surroundings of the mother and her attendants, and the treatment after delivery is generally most injudicious. The patient, instead of being allowed to rest in quiet, is encouraged to move about, and often takes a cold bath in the tank before the house. Midwives from Behar and Upper India are reported to be not quite so ignorant and unskilful as those of Bengal.

Native medical methods.

The Ayurvedic system of medicine is said to have fallen into disrepute owing to the ignorance of the Kabirajes who are its principal exponents. The medicines are generally prepared from iron, silver, copper, arsenic, sulphur, mercury, from plants and trees, and sometimes from cobra poison. A native doctor who has now retired from Government employment reports that he has found the use of cobra poison to be attended by the most excellent results. Ganaks treat cases of small-pox, chicken-pox, and measles, but decline to reveal their methods. Ojhas attempt to cure the sick by incantations, and Mullas by reading the Koran in a chorus.

Increase in facilities for obtaining medical aid.

Though there can be little doubt that many lives are annually lost which could be saved by proper treatment, it is satisfactory to know that of recent years there has been a great increase in the facilities for obtaining medical aid, and in the extent to which the people avail themselves of the advantages now offered to them. The first dispensary was opened in Sylhet in 1863. From the statement in the margin it appears that for every patient treated in 1881 there were 17 in 1901, while the number of operations performed rose from 390 to 8,068. The principal dispensaries are those situated at Sylhet, Maulavi Bazar, Rabir Bazar, Habiganj, Sunamganj, Srimangal, and Kulaura, each of which had a daily average attendance in 1903 of more than 40 persons, while Sylhet headed the list with 81. The diseases for which treatment is most commonly applied are worms, cutaneous disorders, malarial fevers, diseases of the eye, dysentery and diarrhœa, and rheumatic affections. Further details with regard to the medical administration of each subdivision will be found in Table XXII, and with regard to each dispensary in Table XXIII. Table V shows the registered mortality from certain of the principal diseases. The figures are not correct but give some idea of the comparative value of these different ailments as lethal agents. Of recent years the district has been fairly healthy and since 1899 the recorded birth-rate has generally exceeded the recorded death rate by about 8 per mille.

	Dispensaries. No.	Patients treated No.
1881 ...	4	13,552
1891 ...	34	152,782
1901 ...	43	230,996
1903 ...	42	267,329

Leper Asylum. An asylum for the reception of lepers was opened at Sylhet in October 1898. It is situated on the north bank of the Surma on the outskirts of the town, and consists of twenty small *cutcha* houses which can accommodate 18 single lepers and 14 families. Under the Lepers Act III of 1898 pauper lepers may be sent to the asylum from Sylhet, Sunamganj, Karimganj, Maulavi Bazar, and Habiganj, and from Silchar and Hailakandi. Twenty lepers were under treatment in the asylum at the end of 1903.

Surveys. The following is a list of the various measurements and surveys which at different times have been made of different portions of the district :—

1.	Hastobad by Mr. Willes	1788 to 1790
2.	Halabadi (*a*) partly by Mr. Ward ...	1820
	(*b*) „ „ „ Tucker ...	1822 to 1829
3.	Lieutenant Fisher's Survey of *ilam* lands	1827 to 1834
4.	Survey for the resumption of invalid Revenue-free grants by deputy collectors	1836 to 1840
5.	Lieutenant Thuillier's Survey of Jaintia	1837 to 1840
6.	Ditto 11 parganas of Zilla Latu	1842
7.	*Takbast* Survey	1859 to 1866
8.	Survey of *ilam* and other petty temporarily settled estates in the district by deputy and sub-deputy collectors	1871 to 1880
9.	Survey of Jaintia by Mr. Beckett ...	1875 to 1878

10.	Topographical Survey of the hills in the Karimganj, South Sylhet, and Habiganj subdivisions by Major Badgley and Colonel Woodthorpe	1877 to 1883
11.	Survey to test the accuracy of the *takbast* measurement by Mr. P. A. G. Cowley	1882
12.	Cadastral Survey of pargana Pratapgarh by Mr. Barrett	1891 to 1892
13.	Cadastral Survey of Jaintia Parganas by Mr. Barrett	1892 to 1893
14.	Cadastral Survey of *ilam* estates in Sylhet Proper, by Babu G. C. Das, E.A.C.	1896 to 1897

The revenue survey of 1859—1866, which is generally spoken of as the *takbast*, is of considerable importance, as the maps and papers have on more than one occasion been held by the Civil Courts to be valuable evidence of possession and title. It was never confirmed, as required by section 4, Act IX of 1847; but, in spite of this, it is the general policy of Government to decline to recognise any claims to land which was not included in the purview of its operations.

APPENDIX.

LIST OF TABLES.

APPENDIX.

LIST OF TABLES.

STATEMENT A.

List of Tea Gardens.

Name of garden.	Name of owners or Company to which it belongs.	Thana in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivisional head-quarters.	Area on 31st December 1904.	Area under tea (both mature and immature) on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on 31st December 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
			Miles.	Acres.	Acres.	
NORTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION.						
1. Bagchara ...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ld.	Jaintiapur ...	31	713	222	156
2. Barjan ...	Ditto ...	Sadr	10	788	205	241
3. Brahmanchara ...	Mhd. Bakht, Karim Baksh, Golam Rabbani and Abdul Majid.	Ditto ...	4	329	130	43
4. Cherragong including Fatehpur.	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ld.	Goyainghat ...	10	872	336	294
5. Chicknagul ...	Babu Jawar Mohal Tasniwal.	Ditto ...	10¾	2,430	204	218
6. Dawkergul ...	Lubha Tea Co., Ld. ..	Kanairghat ...	40	630	170	203

STATEMENT A.—contd.

List of Tea Gardens.

Name of garden.	Name of owners or Company to which it belongs.	Thana in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivisional head-quarters.	Area on 31st December 1904.	Area under tea (both mature and immature) on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on 31st December 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
			Miles.	Acres.	Acres.	
NORTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION—contd.						
7. Gulni ...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ld.	Goyainghat ...	12	1,368	440	468
8. Indanagar ...	Lubha Tea Co., Ld. ...	Fenchuganj ...	21¼	2,631	(a) 400	458
9. Jaflang ...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ld.	Goyainghat ...	28	1,910	1,072	1,350
10. Jaintia ...	Ditto ...	Jaintiapur ...	32	612	165	146
11. Kalagul ...	Ditto ...	Sadr	9	1,378	429	463
12. Kewachara ...	Lakatura Tea Co., Ld,	Ditto ...	5½	1,155	489	308

13. Khadimnagar ...	North Sylhet Tea Co., Ld.	Ditto ...	5½	3,712	257	510
14. Lakatura ...	Lakatura Tea Co., Ld.	Ditto ...	3	1,831	608	633
15. Lalakhal ...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ld.	Jaintiapur ...	34	1,396	187	253
16. Lubhachara ...	Lubha Tea Co., Ld. ...	Kanairghat ...	32	892	485	324
17. Malnichara ...	Sylhet Tea Co., Ld. ...	Sadr	3½	2,497	620	586
18. Maurapur and Anipur.	Land Mortgage Bank of India.	Fenchuganj ...	20	2,175	460	522
19. Mulagul ...	Lubha Tea Co., Ld. ...	Kanairghat ...	35	937	250	214
20. Nunchara ...	Ditto ...	Ditto ...	39	1,027	213	233
21. Tarapur ...	Babu Baikuntha Chandra Gupta.	Parkul ...	2	505	136	106
HABIGANJ SUBDIVISION.						
1. Amo or Ghanesyampur.	Messrs Aitchison, Alex, Milne and A. Odling.	Muchikandi ...	23	2,840	806	1,040
2. Chandichara ...	Chandichara Tea Co., Ld.	Ditto ...	22	1,887	664	649
3. Chandpur ...	Chapndur Tea Co., Ld.	Ditto ...	21	4,551	1,260	1,428
4. Daragaon ...	Bharaura Tea and Messrs. McLeod & Co., Ld.	Ditto ...	16	3,151	1,138	1,049

(*a*) Estimated.

STATEMENT A.—contd.

List of Tea Gardens.

Name of garden.	Name of owners or Company to which it belongs.	Thana in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivisional head-quarters.	Area on 31st December 1904.	Area under tea (both mature and immature) on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on 31st December 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
			Miles.	Acres.	Acres.	
HABIGANJ SUBDIVISION.—contd.						
5. Deundi ...	Messrs. R. L. Alston and J. E. Aird.	Muchikandi ...	17	1,962	790	730
6. Lalchand ...	Messrs. R. L. Alston and M. H. Alston.	Ditto ...	12	2,000	636	720
7. Laskarpur ...	Laskarpur Tea Co., Ld.	Ditto ...	19	3,090	755	887
8. Parkul ...	Parkul Syndicate. ...	Ditto ...	19	2,044	300	335
9. Rasidpur ...	Bharaura (Sylhet) Tea Co., Ld.	Ditto ...	16	4,310	1,328	1,323
10. Rema ...	Imperial Tea Co., Ld.	Ditto ...	24	1,911	749	638

11. Surma ...	Ditto	Madhabpur ...	20	4,025	856	962
12. Teliapara ...	Teliapara Tea Co., Ld.	Ditto ...	21	1,562	650	646
SOUTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION.						
1. Alinagar ...	Alinagar Tea Co., Ld,	Kamalganj ...	16	3,624	1,030	1,491
2. Amrailchara ...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co, Ld.	Srimangal ...	24	(b) 3,096	689	959
3. Baramchal ...	Messrs. Macneill & Co. and Executors of late Messrs. Davidson and Malet.	Rajnagar ...	21	1,974	450	505
4. Bharaura (North) ...	Bharaura (Sylhet) Tea Co., Ld.	Srimangal ...	14	2,421 (4 and 5 together)	1,400 (4 and 5 together)	1,041
5. Do. (South) ...	Ditto ...	Ditto ...	15			495
6. Burmachara ...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ld.	Ditto ...	24	(c) 5,313	555	582
7. Chandbhag ...	Lubha Tea Co., Ld. ...	Rajnagar ...	17	1,393	316	231
8. Chatlapur ...	Alinagar Tea Co. ...	Kamalganj ...	19	3,042	822	1,359
9. Clevedon ...	Messrs. K. C. Harrison, G. S. Beatson, H. A. Harrison and others.	Hingajiya ...	27	1,359	328	530

(b) Includes figures for Huglichara.
(c) Includes figures for Rajghat and Shindurkhan.

STATEMENT A.—contd.

List of Tea Gardens.

Name of garden.	Name of owners or Company to which it belongs.	Thana in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivisional head-quarters.	Area on 31st December 1904.	Area under tea (both mature and immature) on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on 31st December 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
			Miles.	Acres.	Acres.	
SOUTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION—contd.						
10. Dhalai ...	Dhalai Tea Co. ...	Kamalganj ...	23	1,500	570	755
11. Fultala ...	New Sylhet Tea Co. ...	Hingajiya ...	32	2,865	1,100	1,510
12. Fuskuri ...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ld.	Matiganj ...	22	(d) 9,878	490	433
13. Gandichara ...	Ditto ...	Ditto ...	23	345	Not available.	564
14. Gayasnagar ...	Mr. H. P. S. McMeekin.	Maulavi Bazar ...	7	1,608	391	428
15. Gazipur ...	Messrs. Andrew Yule & Co., W. Marillier, R. Wood and Dr. Le Franc.	Hingajiya ...	23	1,124	240	285

STATEMENT A.

16. Govindpur ...	Babus Baikuntha Nath Sarma, Sukhamaya Chaudhuri and Rashamaya Chaudhuri.	Kamalganj ...	20	655	Not available.	618
17. Halaichara ...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ld.	Hingajiya ...	14	572	285	387
18. Harchara ...	Babu Surja Mani Das	Rajnagar ...	16	100	35	31
19. Hingajiya ...	Chargola Tea Association, Ld.	Hingajiya ...	15	2,118	942	1,129
20. Huglichara ...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ld.	Srimangal ...	26	Included in Amrailchara.	694	767
21. Ita	Langla (Sylhet) Tea Co., Ld.	Maulavi Bazar ...	16	3,670	1,300	1,520
22. Jagchara ...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ld.	Srimangal ...	11	2,473	906	1,091
23. Kajurichara ...	Ditto ...	Ditto ...	23	Inclnded in Fuskuri.	559	852
24. Kakiachara ...	Ditto ...	Ditto ...	17	2,069(*e*)	419	503
25. Kalighat ...	Ditto ...	Ditto ...	19	1,683	776	1,035
26. Kaliti ...	Kaliti Tea Co., Ld. ...	Hingajiya ...	24	232	Not available.	445
27. Kanihati ...	The Langla (Sylhet) Tea Co., Ld.	Kamalganj ...	16	1,362	1,120	1,903

(*d*) Includes figures for Kajurichara, Puttiachara, and Tiprachara.
(*e*) Includes figures for Phulchara.

STATEMENT A.—contd.

List of Tea Gardens.

Name of Garden.	Name of owners or Company to which it belongs.	Thana in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivisional head-quarters.	Area on 31st December 1904.	Area under tea (both mature and immature) on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on 31st December 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SOUTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION—contd.			Miles.	Acres.	Acres.	
28. Kapnapahar ...	Messrs. H. R. Klugh, A. J. M. McLaughlin and D. Laing.	Hingajiya ...	30	1,082	345	350
29. Karmachara ...	Mr. Thomas McMeekin	Kamalganj ...	22	3,887	745	1,191
30. Lakhaichara (Luckichara).	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ld.	Srimangal ...	20	271	Not available.	743
31. Langla ...	The Langla (Sylhet) Tea Co., Ld.	Hingajiya ...	14	4,674	1,450	2,303
32. Luayoni ...	Mr. R. L. Alston ...	Ditto ...	12	1,200	40C	425
33. Madhabpur ...	Mr. Thomas McMeekin	Kamalganj ...	19	3,001	619	906

34. Majdihi ...	Majdihi Tea Co., Ld. ...	Srimangal ...	9	3,595	660	791
35. Mirtinga ...	Messrs. J. Peter and R. L. Alston.	Kamalganj ...	9	2,842	640	547
36. Mirzapur ...	Messrs. C. E. Lane, M. Bigge, E. R. Hunt, R. Hunt and W. V. H. Cobbett.	Srimangal ...	30	2,201	398	342
37. Pallakandi ...	Syed Ali Akbar Khandkar.	Hingajiya ...	15	250	60	23
38. Parbatpur ...	Mrs. Balfour ...	Rajnagar ...	8	1,726	330	408
39. Patrakhala ...	Mr. Thomas McMeekin	Kamalganj ...	22	4,392	796	1,337
40. Phulchara ...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ld.	Srimangal ...	18	Included in Kakiachara.	668	982
41. Puttiachara ...	Ditto ...	Ditto ...	23	Included in Fuskuri.	459	409
42. Rajghat ...	Ditto ...	Ditto ...	25	Included in Burmachara.	680	942
43. Rajki	The Surma Valley Tea Co., Ld.	Hingajiya ...	36	2,317	483	635
44. Rajnagar ...	Rajnagar Tea Co., Ld.	Rajnagar ...	10	2,240	829	1,204
45. Rangiachara ...	Maulavi Ali Amjad Khan.	Hingajiya ...	21	2,000	226	213

STATEMENT A.—contd.

List of Tea Gardens.

Name of garden.	Name of owners or Company to which it belongs.	Thana in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivisional headquarters.	Area on 31st December 1904.	Area under tea (both mature and immature) on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on 31st December 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SOUTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION—concld.			Miles.	Acres.	Acres.	
46. Ratna	Imperial Tea Co., Ld....	Hingajiya ...	29	1,551	361	594
47. Sagarnal ...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ld.	Ditto ...	30	1,564	630	812
48. Shamshernagar, including Bhagichara	The Langla (Sylhet) Tea Co., Ld.	Kamalganj ...	15	3,674	1,550	2,173
49. Satgaon ...	Messrs. J. Aitkin, J. Lilburne, J. Steel, R. H. Steel, H. Watson, J. Watson and T. H. Watson.	Srimangal ...	21	2,022	788	1,202

50. Shillua ...	The Surma Valley Tea Co., Ld.	Hingajiya ...	34	2,366	291	333
51. Shindurkhan ...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ld.	Srimangal ...	24	Included in Burma-chara.	594	604
52. Singoor or Degai-chara.	Ditto ...	Hingajiya ...	18	1,860	333	309
53. Tiprachara ...	Ditto ...	Srimangal ...	26	Included in Fuskuri.	634	587
54. Udna	Messrs. H. S. Currie and Cecil Chapman and Rev. W. H. Chapman.	Rajnagar ...	13	1,256	288	264
55. Uttarbhag ...	The Indeswar Tea and Trading Co., Ld.	Ditto ...	15	1,223	341	310
KARIMGANJ SUBDIVISION.						
1. Adamtila ...	Mr. H. A. Brown Constable.	Patharkandi ...	23	2,831	500	624
2. Anipur ...	Chargola Tea Association, Ld.	Ratabari ...	30	(b) 1,127	(a) 1,673	469
3. Baitakhal ...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ld.	Patharkandi ...	26	1,748	412	535
4. Bhubirghat or Evetila.	Messrs. M. C. Noad, Lewis and F. H. Noad.	Ditto ...	25	1,804	594	670

(*a*) Includes figures for Chargola, Kalachara and Tarvinchara.
(*b*) Includes figures for Kalachara.

STATEMENT A.—contd.

List of Tea Gardens.

Name of garden.	Name of owners or Company to which it belongs.	Thana in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivisional head-quarters.	Area on 31st December 1904.	Area under tea (both mature and immature) on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on 31st December 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
KARIMGANJ SUBDIVISION—contd.			Miles.	Acres.	Acres.	
5. Champabari ...	Puthni Tea Co., Ld. ...	Patharkandi ...	25	1,326	643	533
6. Chandkhira ...	Chandkhira Tea Co., Ld.	Ditto ...	24	1,019	392	519
7. Chandnighat and Bidyanagar.	Raja G. C. Roy ...	Ratabari ...	31	975	895	911
8. Chargola ...	Chargola Tea Association, Ld.	Ditto ...	30	1,675	Included in Anipur	1,403
9. Dakhingul ...	Bupendra Sri Ghosh ...	Jaldhub ...	21	588	492	200
10. Dhamai and Silghat	Dhamai Tea Co., Ld....	Ditto ...	26	4,110	776	802
11. Eraligul ...	Eraligul Tea Co., Ld....	Patharkandi ...	17	1,324	492	774

12. Gumbhirachara ...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands' Co., Ld.	Ratabari ...	39	1,326	427	569
13. Hatikhira ...	Hatikhira Tea Co., Ld.	Patharkandi ...	32	1,943	Not available.	1,162
14. Kalachara ...	Chargola Tea Association, Ld.	Ratabari ...	32	Included	in Anipur	379
15. Kalinagar ...	Bharat Samiti, Ld. ...	Ditto ...	30	2,000	405	294
16. Kekragul ...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ld.	Ditto ...	40	3,695	454	908
17. Lakshmichara ...	Babus I. C. Dutta and P. K. Dutta.	Patharkandi ...	...	823	Not available.	...
18. Lalchara and Fanai	East India and Ceylon Tea Co., Ld.	Ratabari ...	37	12,737	774	1,150
19. Lalkhira and Sonakhira.	Langai Valley Tea Co., Ld.	Patharkandi ...	27	769	352	453
20. Langai Valley ...	Ditto ...	Ditto ...	23	1,150	594	1,140
21. Madanpur ...	Babus Iswar Chandra Datta and Prasanna Kumar Datta.	Jaldhub ...	15	1,395	204	241
22. Magurachara ...	Chargola Tea Association, Ld.	Ratabari ..	42	1,604	575	880
23. Mukamchara ...	East India and Ceylon Tea Co., Ld.	Ditto ...	34	2,185	684	704

STATEMENT A—concld.

List of Tea Gardens.

Name of garden.	Name of owners or Company to which it belongs.	Thana in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivisional head-quarters.	Area on 31st December 1904.	Area under tea (both mature and immature) on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on 31st December 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
KARIMGANJ SUBDIVISION—concld.			Miles.	Acres.	Acres.	
24. Oliviachara ...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ld.	Ratabari ...	40	824	310	470
25. Peplagul ...	Puthni Tea Co., Ld. ...	Patharkandi ...	26	1,555	548	836
26. Puthni... ...	Ditto ...	Ditto ...	27	2,100	695	1,091
27. Salgai	Hatikhira Tea Co., Ld.	Ditto ...	30	1,898	1,300	1,005
28. Samanbhag ...	Samanbhag Tea Co., Ld.	Jaldhub ...	27	6,612	885	1,263
29. Shabajpur ...	Babu Golak Chandra Das and others.	Jaldhub ...	15	2,450	230	63

30. Singlachara and Balichara.	Chargola Tea Association Ld.	Ratabari ...	36	2,460	Not available	1,031
31. Siphinjuri Bil ...	Sephinjuri Bil Tea Co., Ld.	Patharkandi ...	28	3,325	1,500	2,038
32. Sivachara ...	East India and Ceylon Tea Co., Ld.	Ratabari ...	35	1,377	550	1,062
33. Sonarupa ...	Messrs. C. Menzies, R. B. Drake, W. R. Walker and Major J. S. F. Mackenzie	Jaldhub ...	27	1,627	500	608
34. Tarvinchara ...	Chargola Tea Association, Ld.	Ratabari ...	30	765	Included in Anipur	333
35. Tilbhum ...	Mr. G. M. C. Black and others.	Patharkandi ...	34	583	565	396

STATEMENT B.

List of Post Offices.

Name of Office.	Thana or Outpost and Pargana in which situated.
Adampur*	Kamalganj, Adampur
Ajmiriganj	Abidabad, Juar Baniyachung.
Akhalia	Sylhet, Akhalia.
Assampara	Muchikandi, Taraf.
Atgram	Karimganj, Ichamati.
Badarpur*	Karimganj, Chapghat.
Bahubal	Habiganj, Faizabad.
Balaganj*	Balaganj, Bualjur.
Bamai	Lakhai, Bamai.
Baniyachung ...	Baniyachung, Baniyachung.
Barlekha	Jaldhub, Pathariya.
Begumpur	Balaganj, Buranga.
Bejora	Madhabpur, Bejora.
Bekiteka	Habiganj, Taraf.
Bhangabazar ...	Karimganj, Chapghat.
Bianibazar	Jaldhub, Panchakhanda Khurda.
Birasri	Karimganj, Kusiarkul.
Biswanath	Biswanath, Bajubanbhag.
Bithangal	Abidabad, Bithangal.
Bramandura	Habiganj, Uchail.
Chandkhira* ...	Patharkandi, Pratapgarh.
Chandpur Bagan* ...	Muchikandi, Taraf.
Charkhai	Jaldhub, Charkhai.
Chatali*	Maulavi Bazar, Chatali.
Chhatak *	Chhatak, Chhatak.
Chhatiain	Habiganj, Bejora.
Dakhinbhag* ...	Jaldhub, Pathariya.
Dhakadakshin ...	Golapganj, Dhakadakshin.
Dharmapasha ...	Dharmapasha, Selbaras
Dighirpar	Maulavi Bazar, Chowalis.
Dirai Chandpur ...	Dirai, Khalisa Betal.
Dullabchara* ...	Patharkandi, Pratapgarh.
Dullabpur	Maulavi Bazar, Chowalis.

FOOT-NOTE—The offices marked with asterisks are combined post and telegraph offices and there is a departmental telegraph office at Sylhet town.

STATEMENT B—contd.

List of Post Offices.

Name of Office.	Thana or Outpost and Pargana in which situated.
Duttagram	Kamalganj, Kanihati.
Dwarabazar* ...	Chhatak, Dualia.
Fenchuganj*	Fenchuganj, Mowrapur Howli.
Gankul	Jaldhub, Pathariya.
Gaurarang	Sunamganj, Lakshansiri.
Gobindaganj	Chhatak, Kauria
Gobindapur	Habiganj, Kasimnagar.
Golapganj	Golapganj, Baraya.
Gopaya	Habiganj, Taraf.
Goyainghat	Goyainghat, Dhargam
Habiganj*	Habiganj, Taraf.
Inathganj	Nabiganj, Agna.
Indeswar	Rajnagar, Indeswar.
Itakhola*	Madhabpur, Bejora.
Jaflang	Goyainghat, Jaflang.
Jagannathpur ...	Jagannathpur, Atuajan Kismat.
Jaintiapur	Jaintiapur Jaintiapuriraj.
Jaldhub	Jaldhub, Bahadurpur.
Jalsuka	Abidabad,. Jalsuka.
Jatua	Chhatak, Jatua.
Kajaldhara*	Hingajiya, Langla.
Kaliarbhanga ...	Nabiganj, Baniyachung,
Kalighat*	Matiganj, Balisira
Kamalganj	Kamalganj, Bhanugach.
Kamarkhal	Jagannathpur, Naigang.
Kanaibazar	Patharkandi, Pratapgarh.
Kanairghat*	Kanairghat, Choura.
Karimganj*	Karimganj, Kusiarkul.
Khadimnagar ...	Sylhet.
Kubajpur	Jagannathpur, Atuajan.
Kulaura	Hingajiya, Langla.
Kurua	Balaganj, Kurua.
Lakhai	Lakhai, Lakhai.
Lalabazar	Sylhet, Chaitanyanagar.
Lalchand	Habiganj, Taraf.
Langla*	Hingajiya, Langla.

FOOT-NOTE—The offices marked with asterisks are combined post and telegraph offices.

STATEMENT B—contd.

List of Post Offices.

Name of Office.	Thana or Outpost and Pargana in which situated.
Latu	Karimganj, Barapara
Lugaon	Nabiganj, Dinarpur.
Madhabpur	Madhabpur, Bejora.
Madhyanagar ...	Dharmapasha, Bangsikunda
Manumukh*	Maulavi Bazar, Satrasati Howli.
Maulavi Bazar* ...	Maulavi Bazar, Chowalis.
Moglabazar	Sylhet, Renga.
Muchikandi	Muchikandi, Taraf.
Mudna*	Lakhai, Lakhai.
Munshibazar* ...	Maulavi Bazar, Bhanugach.
Nabiganj	Nabiganj Juar Baniyachung
Narpati	Muchikandi, Taraf.
Nilambazar	Karimganj, Deudi.
Pagla	Sunamganj, Pagla.
Pail	Habiganj, Taraf.
Pailgaon	Jagannathpur, Atuajan Kismat.
Patharkandi* ...	Patharkandi, Pratapgarh.
Pathariya	Sunamganj, Khalisa Betal.
Phultola	Hingajiya, Bhatera.
Prithimpasha .	Hingajiya, Langla.
Pukhura	Baniyachung, Baniyachung.
Putijuri	Habiganj, Putijuri.
Rainagar	Sylhet, Kashba Sylhet.
Rajaniganj	Hingajiya, Langla,
Rajnagar	Rajnagar, Shamshernagar.
Ratabari	Ratabari, Paldahar.
Sachna	Dharmapasha, Khalisa Betal
Sagarnal	Hingajiya, Langla.
Saistaganj*	Habiganj, Taraf.
Satgaon ...	Matiganj, Satgaon.
Satiajuri	Habiganj, Tataf.
Shamsherganj ...	Matiganj, Satgaon.
Shamshernagar* ...	Kamalganj, Shamshernagar.
Srigauri	Karimganj Chapghat.
Srimangal	Matiganj, Balisira.
Sughar	Habiganj, Taraf.

FOOT-NOTE—The offices marked with asterisks are combined post and telegraph offices.

STATEMENT B—concld.

List of Post Offices.

Name of Office.	Thana or Outpost and Pargana in which situated.
Sujatpur	Habiganj, Juanshai.
Sukhair	Dharmapasha, Sukhair.
Sunamganj*	Sunamganj, Lakhansiri.
Syedpurbazar ...	Nabiganj, Agna.
Sylhet	Sylhet town.
Tahirpur	Tahirpur, Laur.
Tajpur	Balaganj, Dulali.

FOOT-NOTE—The offices marked with asterisks are combined post and telegraph offices.

STATEMENT C.

List of Trade Centres.

Thana or Out-post.	Trade centres.
SUNAMGANJ SUB-DN.	
Tahirpur ...	Badaghat Bazar. Sripur Bazar. Tahirpur.
Dharmapasha ...	Bichna. Bir. Dharmapasha. Jayasri. Madhyanagar. Mahishhola. Paikarhati. Rajapur. Sanbari.
Dirai ...	Anandapur. Bara Matabpur. Charnarchar. Dirai. Gachia. Hushanpur. Rahutola. Ranarchar. Sajanpur. Salla. Syamarchar.
Sunamganj ...	Jaikalas. Jainagar. Pagla. Sachna. SUNAMGANJ.
Jagannathpur...	Budhrail. Hushanpur. Isakpur. Jagannathpur. Kamarkhal. Kaminipur. Keshabpur. Pailgaon. Patkura. Ramapatipur. Rasulganj. Shibganj.
Chhatak ...	Ambari. Baruigaon.
SUNAMGANJ SUB-DN—concld.	
Chhatak—concld.	CHHATAK BAZAR. Chaudhuri's Hat. Duhalia. Dwara Bazar. Ilim Chaudhuri's Hat Imamganj Hat. Jauar Hat. Gobindaganj. Jiapur. Kalaruka. Mangalpur. Marja. Noabazar. Singchapair. Sonauta.
HABIGANJ SUB-DN.	
Baniyachung and Abidabad.	AJMIRIGANJ. BANIYACHUNG. Birat. Bithangal. Gunai. Ikram. Jalsuka. Kamalganj. Markhali. Pukhura. Sangar. Sujatpur.
Lakhai ...	Bulla. Lakhai.
Madhabpur ...	Baghasura. Bejora Hat. Chenghar Bazar. Chhatiain. Deogas. Dharmaghar. Harinkholar Bazar. Itakhola. Jagadishpur. Kalirbazar. MADHABPUR BAZAR. Mantala Bazar. Munshi Bazar. Shahapur. Surmachara Garden. Teliapara Garden.

STATEMENT C—contd.

List of Trade Centres.

Thana or Out-post.	Trade centres.
HABIGANJ SUB-DN—concld.	
Habiganj ...	Bahubal.
	Bekiteka.
	Daudnagar.
	HABIGANJ.
	Mashajan.
	Mirpur.
	Nandanpur.
	Pail.
	Purikhola.
	Putijuri.
	Saistaganj.
	Sarkarer Bazar
	Shahji Bazar.
	Sughar.
	Tungeswar.
Muchikandi ...	Amu.
	Assampara.
	Basirganj.
	Chandbhanga.
	Chandpur.
	Chunarughat.
	Daragaon.
	Deundi.
	Gargaria.
	Gaziganj.
	Habibulla.
	Lalchand.
	Laskarpur.
	Muchikandi.
	Parkul.
	Rajabazar.
	Remachara.
	Sakir Mahmud.
Nabiganj ...	Gopla.
	Inathganj.
	Khagaura.
	NABIGANJ.
	Saidpur.
	Shibganj.
NORTH SYLHET SUB-DN.	
Biswanath ...	Amtail.
	Bairagi Bazar.
	Biswanath.
NORTH SYLHET SUB-DN—contd.	
Biswanath—concld.	Habrar Bazar.
	Kaliganj.
	Kamal Bazar.
	Lamakazi Bazar.
	Mufti Bazar.
	Pargana Bazar.
	Rajaganj.
	Saifaganj.
Balaganj ...	BALAGANJ.
	Burunga Bazar.
	Dewan Bazar.
	Goala Bazar.
	Goaljur Bazar.
	Khankar Bazar.
	Mangal Chandir Bazar.
	Muktarpur Bazar.
	Noabazar or Umarpur Bazar.
	Parganar Bazar or Dakshiner Bazar.
	Purkayasther Bazar.
	Sarkar Bazar.
	Thanar Bazar.
Sylhet ...	Akhalia.
	SYLHET TOWN.
Fenchuganj ...	Fenchuganj.
	Ghilachara known as Dewliband Bazar.
	Indanagar known as Chaudhuri Bazar.
	Kayasthagaon known as Bialiabazar.
	Kotalpur known as Sen Bazar.
Goyainghat ...	Binnakandi.
	Chailakhel.
	Garo.
	Goyain.
	Haripur.
	Joga Bahar Haor.
	Kohaighar.

STATEMENT C—contd.

List of Trade Centres.

Thana or Out-post.	Trade centres.	Thana or Out-post.	Trade centres.
NORTH SYLHET SUB-DN—concld.		SOUTH SYLHET SUB-DN—contd.	
Goyainghat—concld.	Manikganj Bazar. Mitiri Mahal (Salutikar). NIJPAT. Panch Hatikhel. Jaflang Garden. Panichara. Sarufaud.	Maulavi Bazar—concld.	Dhipir Bazar in village Marukuna. Dighirpar in village Atgaon. Durgaganj in village Goalnagar known as Gayghar. Fakirer Bazar in village Damia. Gobindapur in village Dughar. Gopinathganj in village Shatia. Kalekhar Bazar in Nij Athangiri. Kazir Bazar in village Bekamura. Madanganj in village Mutukpur. Manumukh. MAULAVI BAZAR. Nayabazar in village Kamalpur. Shamsherganj in village Daulatpur. Sarkar Bazar in village Sadhuhati. Shibganj in village Damia. Syam Roy's Bazar in village Barman.
Golapganj ...	Baiyar Bazar. Chandarpur Bazar. Chaudhuri Bazar. Golapganj Bazar. Kurer Bazar. Puran Baiyar Bazar. Purbabhag Bazar. Purkayasther Bazar Rakhalganj Bazar. Senapatir Bazar. THAKURBARI BAZAR.		
Kanairghat ...	Aghbatia. Bhabaniganj. Birdhal. Chanderhat (Fatehganj.) Chatal Bazar. Gachbari. Kanairghat. Lalakhal. Manikganj. Mukiganj (Jhingabari.) Mulagul. Natanpur. Rajaganj. Sharakerhat.	Matiganj ...	Bhairab Bazar. Bowlasir. Jibanganj. Kakiachara. Kalapur, Gosain's Bazar. Matiganj. Rajar Bazar. Sindurkhan. Srimangal.
SOUTH SYLHET SUB-DN.			
Maulavi Bazar ...	Akhailkura. Bhairaber Bazar in village Gayghar. Dasher Bazar in villages Raipur and Abdhalpur.	Rajnagar ...	Baburbazar. Bagichar Bazar. Bhairabganj. Bhangor Hat. Bhater Bazar. Chaudhuri's Bazar.

STATEMENT C—contd.

List of Trade Centres.

Thana or Out-post.	Trade centres.	Thana or Out-post.	Trade centres
SOUTH SYLHET SUB-DN—contd.		SOUTH SYLHET SUB-DN—concld.	
Rajnagar—concld.	Dewandighirpar Ghargaon. Ghoser Bazar. Kadamhata. Kankapan. Rajkrishna Bazar. Saheber Bazar. Sarkarer Bazar. Sonatola Bazar. Tarapasha.	Kamalganj—concld.	Tulsidasir or Joflar Bazar (Madhabpur.)
Kamalganj ...	Adiachara Garden. Alinagar do. Babur Bazar (Kamarteki.) Babur Bazar (Srinathpur.) Bade Ubhahatar Bazar. Bairagir Bazar. Dighirparer Bazar. (Brindabanpur.) Dourachara Garden. Ghater Bazar (Dharmapur.) Heringar Bazar. Kamalganj Bazar. Kanihati Garden. Katabil Garden. Kurmachara Garden Madanpur Garden. Madhabpur do. Mahalarparer Bazar (Srigar.) Mirtinga Garden. Munshi Bazar. Pathariya Garden. Ranir Bazar. Salimullar Bazar (Srinathpur, Bhanugach.) Shamshernagar Garden. Sarkarer Bazar (Madhabpur.) Tetoigaon Bazar. Tilar Bazar or Kanaidasir Bazar (Adampur.)	Hingajiya ...	Bhatera. Chaudhurir Bazar. Fulertal. Hingajiya. Kajaldhara. Kajaldhara Garden. Katarkona. Kaukapan. Kulaura. Lalbag. Langla Garden. Rabirbazar. Rangichara Garden. Sakaband.
		KARIMGANJ SUB-DN.	
		Karimganj ...	Babur Bazar. Bachlar ,, Badarpur ,, Bhanga ,, Bholanath ,, Biabain Bazar (New) Do. (Old) Bidyanagar. Chadnighat Bazar. Chapra. Chhagli. Dattapur. Durgarbazar. Ghoramara Laskar's Bazar. Kachuamukh. Kalibari Bazar. Kaliganj. Kalinagar. KARIMGANJ. Kazirkhalerparer Bazar. Khalar Bazar. Kuchkhauri Bazar. Lakhir Bazar. Latu. Manipuripara.

STATEMENT C—concld.

List of Trade Centres.

Thana or Out-post.	Trade centres.
KARIMGANJ SUB-DN.—contd.	
Karimganj—concld.	Mirerbazar.
	Miyakhali.
	Miyar Bazar.
	Munshi Bazar.
	Nilambazar.
	Noabazar.
	Puran Bazar.
	Ratabari.
	Ratanganj.
	Sarupganj.
	Shahaja Bazar.
	Shaha Jalaler Bazar
	Srigauri Bazar.
	Srikona ,,
	Suranandapur Bazar.
Ratabari and Patharkandi	Adam Tila Garden.
	Anipur Garden.
	Audhan Bazar.
	Babur Bazar.
	Baitakhal Garden.
	Balichara Bazar.
	Barnail.
	Chandkhira Garden.
	Chargola ,,
	Eraligul ,,
	Eve Tila Garden.
	Hatikhira Garden.
	Isaganj.
	Kanair-Bazar.
	Langai Garden.
	Medli ,,
	Noabazar.
	Parganar Bazar.
	PATHARKANDI.
	Puthini Garden.
	Salgai ,,
	Tilbhum ,,
Jaldhub ...	Abhangir Bazar.
	Afisher ,,
	Ajimganj ,,
	Alinagar ,,
KARIMGANJ SUB-DN.—concld	
Jaldhub ...	Bag Prachanda Khan's Bazar.
	Bairagir ,,
	Barlekha.
	Barnir Bazar.
	Bholadahar.
	Biani Bazar.
	Bichra ,,
	Bohalir Bazar.
	Charia ,,
	Churkhai.
	Dakhingul Garden.
	Daser Bazar.
	Dhamai Garden.
	Dubager Bazar.
	Fakirer ,,
	Gajbhag Garden.
	Gangkul.
	Ghagur Bazar.
	Gogra.
	Gopal Roy's Bazar.
	Jaldhub.
	Kakura Bazar.
	Kalibari ,,
	Kamalar ,,
	Kanongu's Bazar.
	Kathaltoli.
	Kolajura.
	Miyakhanir Bazar.
	Munshirkhalparer Bazar.
	Pakhiala.
	Radhar Bazar.
	Rajar ,,
	Ramdha ,,
	Saleswar ,,
	Shabajpur Bazar.
	Sheolartuk ,,
	Shibganj ,,
	Sonarupa Garden.
	Sujanagar.
	Talimpur.
	Teradaler Bazar.

STATEMENT D.

List of Middle Schools in 1905.

NAMES OF SCHOOL.	NAMES OF SCHOOL.
North Sylhet Subdivision.	*Habiganj Subdivision—concld.*
Akhalia M. E.	Jalsuka (Krishna Gobindo M. E. School)
Balaganj M. V.	Machulia M. V.
Begumpur (Sarat Sundari M. E. School).	Mirasi M. E.
Burunga M. V.	Mirpur (Ram Gopal M. E School)
Dattarail M. E. (Dhakadakshin)	Nabiganj M. E.
Jaintia M. V.	Putijuri M. E.
Kanairghat M. E.	Rajarbazar M. V.
Mangalchandi M. E.	Rarisal M. E.
Moglabazar M. E.	Saistaganj M. E.
Naikhai M. V.	
Rankeli M. E.	*South Sylhet Subdivision.*
Sylhet town (Girish M. E. School)	
" (Model Girl's M. V. School)	Bhatera M. E.
	Bhunabir M. E.
	Kamalganj M. E.
	Maulavi Bazar M. V.
Sunamgunj Subdivision.	Munshi Bazar (Kali Prosad M. E. School)
Brahmanjhulia M. E.	Panchgaon (Kamal Charan M. E. School)
Chhatak M. E.	Prithimpasha (Ali Amjad M. E. School)
Duhaliya M. E.	Srimangal (Victoria M. E. School)
Jatua M. V.	Tengra (Porteous M. E. School)
Kubajpur (Lalchand M. E. School)	
Madhyanagar M. E.	
Pagla M. E.	
Rajanagar M. E.	*Khrimganj Subdivision.*
Sunamganj (Raj Gobinda M. V. School)	
	Agiaram (Vishnupriya M. E. School)
	Bhanga M. E.
Habiganj Subdivision.	Bianibazar (Panchakhanda M. E. School)
Agna (Uday Gobinda M. E. School)	Birasri M. E.
Ajmiriganj M. E.	Dhakauttor M. V.
Bamai (Ramdhan M. E. School)	Karimganj (Tilak Chand M. V. School)
Baniyachung (Loknath M. E. School)	
Bejora M. E.	Latu (Baikunta Chandra M. E. School)
Gobindapur M. V.	
Gopaya M. E.	Lauta M. E.
Habiganj M. V.	Nilambazar M. E.
Imamganj (Baidyanath M. E School)	Pathariya M. E.

TABLE I.

Rainfall.

The number of years for which the average has been calculated is shewn below the name of each station.

MONTHS.	AVERAGE RAINFALL IN INCHES.					
	Sunam-ganj. (22)	Sylhet. (47)	Karim-ganj. (22)	Langla. (21)	Maulavi Bazar. (18)	Habi-ganj. (22)
January	0·49	0·37	0·57	0·28	0·39	0·34
February	1·17	1·48	1·57	1·25	1·31	1·27
March	6·14	6·25	10·74	5·93	5·36	5·63
April	10·09	13·92	19·16	10·10	9·03	8·04
May	21·19	21·83	24·19	18·29	18·85	16·61
June	39·60	32·17	30·55	20·63	18·97	18·66
July	43·44	25·39	22·48	14·54	16·28	14·17
August	46·94	25·39	22·57	14·36	14·74	12·73
September	31·74	20·55	18·90	13·04	12·13	11·31
October	8·07	7·90	7·74	5·75	5·65	4·84
November	0·62	1·12	1·06	0·95	1·07	0·61
December	0·19	0·27	0·72	0·38	0·40	0·30
Total of year ...	209·68	156·64	160·25	105·50	104·18	94·51

TABLE II.

Distribution of Population.

THANA.	Population in 1901.	Population in 1891.	Difference.	Area in square miles.	Population per square miles.	Number of persons censused on tea gardens.
*Sadr** ...	241 811	255,064	−13,253	604	400	6,738
Kanairghat* ...	79,677	82,960	−3,283	229	348	6,555
Balaganj ...	141,989	144,317	−2,328	222	640	....
Sunamganj ...	113,088	107,531	+5,557	431	262	....
Chhatak ...	90,683	88,706	+1,977	257	353	....
Dirai ...	151,020	144,028	+6,992	484	312	....
Dharmapasha	78,961	73,116	+5,845	321	246	....
Habiganj ...	214,710	198,716	+15,994	355	605	16,021
Baniyachung ...	130,198	116,560	+13 638	264	493	....
Madhabpur ...	119,153	108 037	+11,116	183	651	2,841
Nabiganj† ...	90,940	81,279	+9,661	150	606	....
Moulavi Bazar†	276,592	267,837	+8,755	580	477	51,239
Hingajiya ...	102,566	101,804	+762	260	394	18,605
Karimganj	281,565	259,237	+22,328	797	353	37,393
Jaldhub ...	128,895	125,401	+3,494	251	514	5,484
Total district ...	2,241,848	2,154,593	+87,255	5,388‡	416	144,876

* The outpost Goyainghat, which in 1891 was under the Kanairghat thana, has been transferred to the *Sadr* thana. The figures for 1891 have been corrected.

† Hauli Satrasati pargana, which in 1891 contained 4,262 persons, has since been transferred to the Maulavi Bazar thana. The figures for 1891 for these two thanas have been corrected accordingly.

‡ The total area of the district is probably about 5,435 square miles but the Survey Department are unable to guarantee absolute accuracy in a matter of this kind.

TABLE III.

General statistics of population.

PARTICULARS.	NORTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION.		SUNAMGANJ SUBDIVISION.		HABIGANJ SUBDIVISION.		SOUTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION.		KARIMGANJ SUBDIVISION.		TOTAL DISTRICT.		
	Males.	Fems.	Males	Fems.	Males.	Fems.	Males.	Fems.	Males.	Fems.	Persons.	Males.	Fems.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
POPULATION—													
1901 ..	233,229	230,248	230,030	203,722	278,402	276,599	191,318	187,840	208,081	2 02'9	2,241,848	1,141,060	1,100,788
1891 ..	245,490	236,851	219,149	194,232	253,290	251,302	187,875	181,766	195,134	189,504	2,154,593	1,100,938	1,053,655
1881 ..	446,762		382,560		477,789		318,477		343,421		1,969,009	999,785	969,224
1872 ..	352,111		360,812		450,747		255,869		300,000		1,719,539	880,330	839,209
VARIATION—													
1891—1901 ..	−12,261	−6,603	+10,881	+9,490	+25,112	+25,297	+3,443	+6,074	+12,947	+12,875	+87,255	+40,122	+47,133
1881—1891 ..	+35,579		+30,821		+26,803		+51,164		+41,217		+185,584	+101,153	+84,431
1872—1881 ..	+94,651		+21,748		+27,042		+62,608		+43,421		+249,470	+119,455	+130,015
1901.													
RELIGION—													
Total Hindus ..	77,922	73,986	104,235	90,085	127,592	129,327	115,378	115,481	108,848	106,394	1,049,248	533,975	515,273
Vaishnavas ..	49,595	47,871	77,817	68.376	64,474	67,121	29,312	32,530	61,774	61,509	560,379	282,972	277,407
Saktists ..	22,716	20,677	19,989	17,377	49,257	48,937	46,766	46,079	21,445	20,279	313,522	160,173	153,349
Sivaites ..	1,643	1,581	2,989	2,442	4,818	4,495	11,314	10,103	9,238	8,948	57,571	30,002	27,569
Muhammadans ..	153,995	155,003	125,317	113,278	148,726	145,249	74,713	71,343	97,929	94,771	1,180,324	600,680	579,644
Animistic ..	1,176	1,161	464	353	2,024	1,995	1,007	939	1,116	1,102	11,337	5,787	5,550
Total Christians ..	93	85	8	6	55	25	152	67	155	98	744	463	281
Anglican Communion	32	16	....	....	27	12	68	10	64	10	239	191	48
Presbyterian ..	25	26	3	4	5	....	57	40	9	9	178	99	79
Roman Catholic ..	4	3	....	2	1	....	2	1	59	62	134	66	68
Other religions ..	43	13	6	....	5	3	68	10	33	14	195	155	40

CIVIL CONDITION—													
Unmarried	141,397	92,244	139,270	82,133	157,659	99,205	106,277	63,320	120,490	75,441	1,077,436	665,093	412,343
Married	83,695	89,481	82,757	79,950	111,487	117,322	77,036	82,886	80,398	85,159	890,171	435,373	454,798
Widowed	8,137	48,523	8,003	41,639	9,256	60,072	8,005	41,634	7,193	41,779	274,241	40,594	233,647
LITERACY—													
Literate in Bengali	20,796	1,068	13,219	432	25,293	1,419	13,124	665	16,329	712	93,057	88,761	4,296
Literate in English	1,803	37	603	7	1,456	24	976	29	1,017	14	5,966	5,855	111
Illiterate	210,835	229,052	216,507	203,284	252,664	275,143	177,546	187,108	190,540	201,650	2,144,329	1,048,092	1,096,237
LANGUAGES SPOKEN—													
Bengali	224,520	222,991	226,602	202,145	268,247	268,231	154,298	150,998	177,539	172,978	2,068,549	1,051,206	1,017,343
Eastern Hindi	4,659	3,455	2,082	380	5,398	4,306	22,985	23,037	20,553	19,767	106,622	55,677	50,945
Tipura	....	....	....	....	1,350	1,312	1,864	1,856	1,393	1,390	9,165	4,607	4,558
Oriya	790	680	36	1	275	214	3,499	3,488	423	502	9,908	5,023	4,885
Manipuri	738	716	403	446	1,004	1,092	5,414	5,399	6,827	6,618	28,657	14,386	14,271

Pargana Hauli Satrasati, which in 1891 contained a population of 2,112 males and 2,150 females, was in September 1891 transferred from the Habiganj to the South Sylhet subdivision.

TABLE IV.

Birth place, race, caste, and occupation.

	North Sylhet Subdivision.		Sunamganj Subdivision.		Habiganj Subdivision.		South Sylhet Subdivision.		Karimganj Subdivision.		Total District.		
	Males.	Fems.	Males.	Fems.	Males.	Fems.	Males.	Fems.	Males.	Fems.	Persons.	Males.	Fems.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Birth Place—													
Born in the district	224,313	223,818	218,921	197,068	260,801	259,691	161,051	157,778	186,104	182,137	2,071,682	1,051,190	1,020,492
" " other parts of Province .	856	713	90	51	276	278	498	625	1,050	834	5,271	2,770	2,501
" " Dacca, Mymensingh & Tippera	869	151	8,472	6,218	6,852	8,468	532	148	597	100	32,407	17,322	15,085
" " Chota Nagpur	1,514	1,511	23	13	3,362	3,378	5,509	6,067	1,537	1,713	24,627	11,945	12,682
" " other parts of Bengal ..	2,875	2,267	1,291	77	3,176	1,709	6,867	7,122	2,682	1,631	29,697	16,891	12,806
" " United Provinces ..	1,508	703	1,068	288	2,209	1,464	9,959	9,566	12,236	12,067	51,068	26,980	24,088
" " Central Provinces ..	417	400	7	1	1,042	1,053	2 169	2,747	2,480	2,828	13,144	6,115	7,029
elsewhere	877	685	158	6	684	558	4,733	3,787	1,395	1,069	13,952	7,847	6,105
Race & Caste—													
Ahir	20	11	1	..	132	136	839	610	1,764	1,580	5,093	2,756	2,337
Baidya	523	439	153	158	444	457	602	571	240	209	3,796	1,962	1,834
Barui	696	555	1	1	1,113	1,122	4,550	4,470	1,978	1,860	16,346	8,338	8,008
Bauri	949	969	15	...	816	499	2,693	2,445	344	369	9,099	4,817	4,282
Bhar	95	43	14	8	134	130	1,446	1,122	2,735	3,131	8,858	4,424	4,434
Bhuinmali	3,265	3,189	917	615	1,948	1,932	9,046	9,367	5,388	5,517	41,184	20,564	20,620
Bhuiya	427	458	..	...	445	400	2.121	1,963	532	660	7,006	3,525	3,481
Bhumij	362	429	..	..	566	537	1,110	1,245	522	307	5.078	2,560	2,518
Brahman	4,633	3,968	2,379	2,036	5,935	5.301	4.824	4,341	3,498	2,846	39,761	21,269	18,492
Chamar	270	228	164	112	1,185	776	5,038	5,129	3,695	3,162	19,759	10,352	9,407
Das including Halwa Das, Sudra and Sudra Das	12,554	12,429	32,875	30,278	16,652	17,320	10,238	10,415	10,502	11,000	164,263	82,821	81,442
Dhoba	537	821	798	507	1,987	2,117	1,718	1,721	1,070	1,248	12,524	6,110	6,414
Dhobi	1,867	1,354	1,439	1,449	593	426	864	1,222	996	774	10,984	5,759	5,225
Dholi	464	506	289	295	719	613	3,047	3,502	395	273	10,103	4,914	5,189
Dom Patni	7,722	7,243	8,191	7,188	2,333	2,227	3,719	3,783	15,203	15,637	73,246	37,168	36,078
Eurasian	3	5	..	...	4	2	1	..	11	7	33	19	14
European (*a*)	24	9	1	..	32	6	124	31	77	13	317	258	59
Ganak	362	345	510	446	1,281	1,327	468	415	226	230	5,610	2,847	2,763
Goala	720	605	408	153	2,391	2,393	2,838	2,936	926	757	14,127	7,283	6,844
Jugi	7,547	7,650	5,966	5,403	10,573	11,413	8,068	7,796	7,459	7,040	78,915	39,613	39,302

Kaibartta	848	832	11,158	9,439	10,453	10,852	146	87	237	177	44,229	22,842	21,387
Kamar	484	567	455	351	1,331	1,154	1,567	1,301	1,154	1,131	9,495	4,991	4,504
Kayastha	7,885	7,312	5,742	5,018	10,779	11,233	4,544	4,444	3,726	3,200	63,883	32,676	31,207
Kshattriya	456	402	31	11	869	943	3,996	3,982	..	...	10,690	5,352	5,338
Kumhar	728	582	849	769	1,887	2,028	1,711	1,726	1,010	988	12,278	6,185	6,093
Malo	126	7	7,581	6,254	806	448	256	381	31	92	15,982	8,800	7,182
Manipuri	364	453	663	644	258	272	123	155	6,677	6,434	16,043	8,085	7,958
Munda	633	574	39	15	1,191	1,058	1,152	986	844	1,207	7,699	3,859	3,840
Namasudra (Chandal)	10,612	10,123	9,693	8,522	21,013	21,304	7,389	7,793	18,386	17,472	132,307	67,093	65,214
Napit	1,741	1,668	1,898	1,607	3,452	3,471	2,228	2,284	1,456	1,419	21,224	10,775	10,449
Santal	430	397	3	..	1,721	1,560	2,838	2,791	1,547	2,109	13,396	6,539	6,857
Shaha	1,566	1,432	3,971	3,325	7,560	8,909	1,900	1,865	1,858	2,020	34,406	16,855	17,551
Sutradhar	757	742	1,387	1,209	3,764	4,076	932	781	45	55	13,748	6,885	6,863
Teli	1,619	1,533	2,267	1,787	4,393	4,688	4,557	4,291	2,655	2,492	30,312	15,521	14,791
Tippera	42	57	..	..	1,405	1,364	1,705	1,675	941	1,072	8,261	4,093	4,168
OCCUPATION—													
Workers	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	844,168	699,002	145,166
Dependents	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,397,680	..	..
TOTAL SUPPORTED—													
Land holders	90,034	82,812	33,142	31,318	33,014	28,766	32,283	32,878	62,783	58,073	485,103	251,256	233,847
Tenants	85,540	91,207	155,595	140,888	163,723	162,950	97,535	91,518	93,400	86,208	1,168,564	595,793	572,771
Farm servants	2,870	568	1,259	541	5,035	3,034	1,749	1,036	1,228	181	17,501	12,141	5,360
Garden labourers	6,274	6,587	..	..	8,701	8,899	31,367	32,981	19,849	20,556	135,214	66,191	69,023
Fishermen	11,649	13,225	20,550	16,462	15,454	15,001	4,877	5,594	5,535	5,375	113,722	58,065	55,657
Priests	2,815	2,593	1,775	1,715	5,478	4,948	2,186	3,107	2,200	1,969	28,786	14,454	14,332
General labourers	3,598	2,902	1,562	1,255	2,744	2,525	1,824	2,379	2,110	1,864	22,763	11,838	10,925
Beggars	3,701	4,656	1,585	2,303	2,484	3,555	1,398	2,456	2,285	2,801	27,224	11,453	15,771

(a) Includes allied races

TABLE IV.

TABLE V.

Vital statistics.

Year.	Population under registration in 1901.	Ratio of births per mille.	Ratio of deaths per mille.	Ratio of deaths per mille from.			
				Cholera.	Small-pox.	Fever.	Bowel complaints.
1901	2,241,848	36·49	28·89	1·25	1·13	13·08	1·80
1902	2,241,848	37·15	33·88	3·93	2·34	12·65	1·95
1903	2,241,848	38·16	27·12	1·03	0·15	11·30	1·73
1904	2,241,848	37·73	27·60	1·64	0·01	10·47	1·82
1905							
1906							
1907							
1908							
1909							
1910							
1911							
1912							

TABLE VI.

Crop statistics.

Particulars.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Total cropped area ...	2,504,058	2,565,334	2,564,609	2,493,020		
Rice	1,966,930	2,071,815	2,075,650	2,061,000		
Mustard	38,433	38,911	38,767	37,000		
Sugarcane ...	11,346	14,414	14,565	15,000		
Pulses	5,582	2,857	3,808	3,000		
Linseed	68,340	69,029	68,598	69,000		
Jute	3,000	9,205	7,400	9,200		
All other crops ..	410,427	359,103	355,821	298,820		

	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Total cropped area ...						
Rice						
Mustard						
Sugarcane ...						
Pulses						
Linseed						
Jute						
All other crops ...						

NOTE—So far as these figures relate to the permanently settled area, they are estimates only.

TABLE VI—contd.

Crop statistics.

	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.
TEA. NORTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION. Number of gardens ...	25	23	22	22		
Area in acres ...	18,961	18,190	18,613	26,711		
Area in acres under plant	8.002	7,831	7,475	7,684		
Outturn of manufactured tea in lbs. ...	2,779,283	2,411,859	2,862,299	2,391,570		
Labour force ...	8,331	8,123	7,734	7,211		
Labourers including dependents imported during the year(a)	238	...	99	202		

	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910	1911.	1912.
TEA. NORTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION. Number of gardens ...						
Area in acres ...						
Area in acres under plant						
Outturn of manufactured tea in lbs. ...						
Labour force						
Labourers including dependents imported during the year(a)						

(a) From 1903 immigration statistics relate to period from 1st July to 30th June.

Table VI—contd.

Crop statistics.

PARTICULARS.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.
HABIGANJ SUBDIVISION.						
Number of gardens ...	13	13	12	12		
Area in acres ...	27,113	29,615	32,310	35,818		
Area in acres under plant	9,890	9,952	9,931	9,990		
Outturn of manufactured tea in lbs. ...	3,831,869	4,045,517	4,737,124	5,278,538		
Labour force ...	11,573	11,958	9,322	9,505		
Labourers including dependents imported during the year(a)	335	...	247	170		
SOUTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION.						
Number of gardens ...	58	57	55	55		
Area in acres ...	89,839	90,568	90,679	96,225		
Area in acres under plant	33,333	33,090	33,248	33,410		
Outturn of manufactured tea in lbs.	14,855,519	14,053,105	16,359,878	17,165,522		
Labour force ...	50,168	46,589	39,913	38,555		
Labourers including dependents imported during the year(a)	1,178	...	1,560	1,498		

(a) From 1903 immigration statistics relate to period from 1st July to 30th June.

Table VI—contd.

Crop statistics.

PARTICULARS.	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.
HABIGANJ SUBDIVISION.						
Number of gardens ...						
Area in acres ...						
Area in acres under plant						
Outturn of manufactured tea in lbs. ...						
Labour force ...						
Labourers including dependents imported during the year(*a*)						
SOUTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION.						
Number of gardens ...						
Area in acres ...						
Area in acres under plant						
Outturn of manufactured tea in lbs. ...						
Labour force ...						
Labourers including dependents imported during the year(*a*)						

(*a*) From 1903 immigration statistics relate to period from 1st July to 30th June.

Table VI—contd.

Crop statistics.

Particulars.		1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.
KARIMGANJ SUBDIVISION.							
Number of gardens ...		36	36	35	35		
Area in acres ...		46,507	49,595	50,005	49,066		
Area in acres under plant ...		21,063	21,036	22,886	21,413		
Outturn of manufactured tea in lbs. ...		9,811,139	11,568,622	13,048,187	14,002,735		
Labour force ...		34,270	29,796	22,825	24,126		
Labourers including dependents imported during the year(a)		1,196	...	1,364	907		
TOTAL DISTRICT.							
Number of gardens ..		132	129	124	124		
Area in acres ...		182,420	187,968	191,607	207,820		
Area in acres under plant	Held by Europeans.	68,279	68,149	69,527	72,497		
	Held by Natives.	4,009	3,760	4,013			
Outturn of manufactured tea in lbs. ...		31,277,810	32,079,103	37,067,488	38,838,365		
Labour force ...		104,342	96,466	79,794	79,397		
Labourers including dependents imported during the year(a)		2,947	(b)	3,270	2,777		

(a) From 1903 immigration statistics relate to period from 1st July to 30th June.
(b) Figures not available.

Table VI—concld.

Crop statistics.

Particulars.		1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.
KARIMGANJ SUBDIVISION.							
Number of gardens ...							
Area in acres ...							
Area in acres under plant ...							
Outturn of manufactured tea in lbs. ...							
Labour force ...							
Labourers including dependents imported during the year(*a*) ...							
TOTAL DISTRICT.							
Number of gardens ...							
Area in acres ...							
Area in acres under plant	Held by Europeans.						
	Held by Natives.						
Outturn of manufactured tea in lbs. ...							
Labour force ...							
Labourers including dependents imported during the year(*a*)							

(*a*) From 1903 immigration statistics relate to period from 1st July to 30th June.

TABLE VII.

Reserved Forests.

Name of reserve.	Area in square miles.	Character of forests.	RECEIPTS.											
			1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
			Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Langai	80	Mixed evergreen forest, dense undergrowth, canes and creepers abundant, interpersed with swampy areas. The predominating species are Cham, Poma, Rata, Jarul, Ping, Jam &c.	12,803	16,322	10,962	7,346								
Singla	23			1,331	1,185	652								

TABLE VIII.

Outturn of timber and fuel and value of minor forest produce.

DETAILS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
RESERVED FORESTS—												
Area in square miles	103	103	103	103								
Outturn (Government and purchasers only)—												
Timber .. .. (c. ft.)	36,110	83,302	48,584	50,157								
Fuel .. .. (c. ft.)	8	204	88	198								
UNCLASSED STATE FORESTS—												
Area in square miles	211	196	179	177								
Outturn (Government and purchasers only) –												
Timber .. .. (c. ft.)	42,476	39,437	72,732	100,810								
Fuel .. .. .. (c. ft.)	153,449	127,500	184,594	165,453								
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Forest receipts	59,041	59,424	68,090	70,425								
Forest expenditure	17,069	21,966	22,781	20,637								
Surplus or deficit	+41,972	+37,458	+45,309	+49,788								

TABLE IX.

Prices of food staples in seers obtainable per rupee.

Year	Period	Sylhet Town. Common rice.	Sylhet Town. Salt.	Sylhet Town. Matikalai.	Sunamganj. Common rice.	Sunamganj. Salt.	Sunamganj. Matikalai.	Habiganj. Common rice.	Habiganj. Salt.	Habiganj. Matikalai.	Maulavi Bazar. Common rice.	Maulavi Bazar. Salt.	Maulavi Bazar. Matikalai.	Karimganj. Common rice.	Karimganj. Salt.	Karimganj. Matikalai.
1880	2nd week of February	14	8½	16	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	...
	" " August	19¼	9¼	21	--	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
1890	" " February	16	9½	15	16	8	16	16	8½	16	20	8	18	16	9½	16
	" " August	12¼	10	17¾	20	8	$13\frac{5}{16}$	14	9	16	13	8	18	12	9	15½
1900	" " February	18½	10½	16	16	9	13	20	10	16	20	10⅝	16	17¾	10½	18
	" " August	16	10½	13¼	13	9	13	16	10	12	14	10⅝	13	18	10½	16
1901	" " February	10	10	12¼	10	9	13	11	10	12	11	10	11½	12	10½	13¼
	" " August	10	10	12¼	10	9¾	12½	10	10	14	9	10	13	10	10	13
1902	" " February	15¾	10	13¼	14	9	13	13	10	14	17	10¼	13	16	10½	16
	" " August	13¼	10¾	13¼	14	10	13	12	10	13	14	11	13	12	10½	13
1903	" " February	13¼	$10\frac{5}{16}$	13¼	12½	10½	13	12½	10¼	13¼	14	11	13	13	10½	12½
	" " August	13¼	12¼	13¼	16	12½	13	13	11½	15½	13½	13	14	11	11	13
1904	" " February	17½	12½	13	17	12½	13¼	16	12⅜	13¼	19	12¾	13	15	12	13
	" " August	17½	12	16	19	12½	14	15	12½	13½	17	12¾	13	15	12½	14
1905	" " February	17½	12½	16	18	12½	14	17	13	13¼	18	12½	12	15½	13	13
	" " August															

TABLE IX—concld.

Prices of food staples in seers obtainable per rupee.

	Sylhet Town.			Sunamganj.			Habiganj.			Maulavi Bazar.			Karimganj.		
	Common rice.	Salt.	Matikalai.	Common rice.	Salt.	Matikalai.	Common rice.	Salt.	Matikalai.	Common rice.	Salt.	Matikalai.	Common rice.	Salt.	Matikalai.
1906 2nd week of February															
1906 " " August															
1907 " " February															
1907 " " August															
1908 " " February															
1908 " " August															
1909 " " February															
1909 " " August															
1910 " " February															
1910 " " August															
1911 " " February															
1911 " " August															
1912 " " February															
1912 " " August															

TABLE X.

Statistics of criminal and civil justice.

Heads of Crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.		1906.		1907.		1908.		1909.		1910.		1911.		1912.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
NORTH SYLHET SUB-DIVISION.																						
CRIMINAL JUSTICE.																						
Number of cases.																						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Secs. 143-153, 157, 158 and 159	48	31	14	13	8	3																
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c.	2	1	3	1	6	3																
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder and culpable homicide. Secs. 302-304, 307, 308, and 396 ...	3	2	9	3	5	1																

Table X—contd.

Statistics of criminal and civil justice.

Heads of Crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.		1906.		1907.		1908.		1909.		1910.		1911.		1912.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
NORTH SYLHET SUB-DIVISION—contd.																						
Criminal Justice.																						
Number of cases.																						
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Secs. 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 335 ...	12	4	16	7	20	6																
(v) Serious criminal force. Secs. 353, 354, 356 and 357	4	3	4	...	3	2																
(vi) Other serious offences against the person ...	5	1	2	...	10	4																
(vii) Dacoity. Secs. 395, 397 and 398 ...	...	—	...	...	1	1																

(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning, or maiming any animal. Secs. 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430-33, and 435-40 ..	15	6	12	...	14	5																
(ix) House-breaking and serious house trespass. Secs. 449-452 454, 455, and 457-460	70	7	73	6	77	8																
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement. Secs. 341-344	10	1	11	3	11	...																
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property	...	...	...	...	1	1																
(xii) Theft. Secs. 379 to 382	88	41	89	36	73	24																
(xiii) Receiving stolen property. Secs. 411 and 414	27	25	16	13	23	14																
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house-trespass. Secs. 453, 456, 447 and 448 ...	24	11	21	4	17	4																
(xv) Other minor offences against property ...	8	6	4	1	5	4																
Total ...	316	139	274	87	274	80												...	...	...	...	...

Table X—contd.

Statistics of criminal and civil justice.

Heads of Crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.		1906.		1907.		1908.		1909.		1910.		1911.		1912.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
SUNAMGANJ SUB-DIVISION.																						
CRIMINAL JUSTICE.																						
Number of cases.																						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Secs. 143-153, 157, 158 and 159 ...	37	31	23	16	12	9																
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c. ...	1	1	1	...	6	5																
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder, and culpable homicide. Secs. 302-304, 307, 308, and 396 ...	5	2	4	1	5	2																
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Secs. 324-326, 329, 331, 333, and 335 ...	5	5	15	5	14	2																
(v) Serious criminal force. Secs. 353, 354, 356 and 357	3	3	2	2	6	3																

(vi) Other serious offences against the person ...	5	5	3	1	3	2
(vii) Dacoity. Secs. 395, 397 and 398 ...	...	...	...	...	1	...
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning, or maiming any animal. Secs. 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430-433 and 435-440.	7	1	10	1	6	...
(ix) House-breaking and serious house-trespass. Secs. 449-452, 454, 455 and 457-460	70	3	56	11	34	3
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement. Secs. 341-344	10	3	12	2	8	2
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property	1	1	...	...	...	...
(xii) Theft. Secs. 379 to 382	55	23	45	16	37	21
(xiii) Receiving stolen property. Secs. 411 and 414	17	11	18	15	20	17
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house-trespass. Secs. 453, 456, 447 and 448 ...	6	2	6	2	7	1
(xv) Other minor offences against property ...	1	1	...	...	2	...
Total ...	223	92	195	72	161	67

Table X—contd.

Statistics of criminal and civil justice.

Heads of Crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.		1906.		1907.		1908.		1909.		1910.		1911.		1912.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
HABIGANJ SUB-DIVISION.																						
Criminal Justice.																						
Number of cases.																						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Secs. 143-153, 157, 158 and 159 ...	54	45	35	35	35	31																
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c. ...	4	3	6	...	4	4																
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder, and culpable homicide. Secs. 302 to 304, 307, 308 and 396 ...	8	2	12	5	8	6																
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Secs. 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 335 ...	25	15	26	18	12	11																

TABLE X.

(v) Serious criminal force. Secs. 353, 354, 356 and 357.	2	2	4	2	9	5
(vi) Other serious offences against the person ...	9	5	4	...	4	2
(vii) Dacoity. Secs. 395, 397 and 398 ...	2	1	...	...	2	...
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning, or maiming any animal. Secs. 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430-433 and 435-440.	25	4	17	1	8	1
(ix) House-breaking and serious house-trespass. Secs. 449-452, 454, 455 and 457-460 ...	132	7	193	4	161	8
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement. Secs. 341-344 ...	14	5	10	1	6	...
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property	9	5	1	...	1	1
(xii) Theft. Secs. 379 to 382	114	44	125	49	75	35
(xiii) Receiving stolen property. Secs. 411 and 414	13	10	25	24	20	16
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house-trespass. Secs. 453, 456, 447, and 448 ...	32	16	39	13	34	10
(xv) Other minor offences against property ...	5	3	3	...	2	1
Total ...	448	167	500	152	381	131

Table X—contd.

Statistics of criminal and civil justice.

Heads of Crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.		1906.		1907.		1908.		1909		1910.		1911.		1912.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
SOUTH SYLHET SUB-DIVISION.																						
Criminal Justice.																						
Number of cases.																						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Secs. 143-153, 157, 158 and 159 ...	27	19	9	6	16	9																
(ii) Other offences aginst the State, public tranquillity, &c. ...	2	2	4	4	7	1																
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder, and culpable homicide. Secs. 302-304, 307, 308 and 396 ...	10	2	8	5	2	1																
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Secs. 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 335 ...	15	5	19	9	22	9																
(v) Serious criminal force Secs. 353, 354, 356 and 357	...	...	5	2	6	2																

(vi) Other serious offences against the person...	3	3		2	5	2
(vii) Dacoity. Secs. 395, 397 and 398	...	..	3	1	3	...
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal. Secs. 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430-433 and 435-440	11	1	9	...	8	1
(ix) House-breaking and serious house-trespass. Secs. 449-452, 454, 455 and 457-460	57	7	73	7	70	4
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement. Secs. 341-344	5	1	3	1	7	4
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property	..	...	...	...	3	2
(xii) Theft. Secs. 379 to 382	53	15	54	19	62	26
(xiii) Receiving stolen property. Secs. 411 and 414	12	12	13	7	18	10
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house-trespass. Secs. 453, 456, 447 and 448	10	3	20	8	18	7
(xv) Other minor offences against property ...	1	1	5	...	4	2
Total ...	206	71	227	71	251	80

Table X—contd.

Statistics of criminal and civil justice.

Heads of Crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.		1906.		1907.		1908.		1909.		1910.		1911.		1912.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
KARIMGANJ SUB-DIVISION.																						
CRIMINAL JUSTICE.																						
Number of cases.																						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Secs. 143-153, 157, 158 and 159 ...	26	17	33	26	13	13																
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c. ...	1	1	5	4	4	2																
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder, and culpable homicide. Secs. 302-304, 307, 308 and 396 .	1	1	6	1	5	2																
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Secs. 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 335 ...	11	5	14	3	15	7																
(v) Serious criminal force. Secs. 353, 354, 356 and 357	4	2	1	...	3	1																

TABLE X.

(vi) Other serious offences against the person ...	3	1	3	1	5	2
(vii) Dacoity. Secs 395, 397 and 398	...	...	...	...	...	...
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief, by killing, poisoning, or maiming any animal. Secs. 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430-433 and 435-440	12	...	17	4	11	5
(ix) House-breaking and serious house-trespass. Secs. 449-452, 454, 455, and 457-460	42	3	14	6	44	3
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement. Secs. 341-344	6	2	9	2	8	2
xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property	2	...	1	1	...	...
(xii) Theft. Secs. 379 to 382	64	25	60	14	105	24
(xiii) Receiving stolen property. Secs. 411 and 414	12	9	19	13	9	9
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house-trespass. Secs. 453, 456 447 and 448	2	1	13	2	13	2
(xv) Other minor offences against property ...	3	1	2	...	3	3
Total ...	189	68	197	77	238	75

Table X—contd.

Statistics of criminal and civil justice.

Heads of Crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.		1906.		1907.		1908.		1909.		1910.		1911.		1912.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
DISTRICT TOTAL.																						
Criminal Justice.																						
Number of cases.																						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Secs. 143-153, 157, 158 and 159 ...	192	143	114	96	84	65																
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c. ...	10	8	19	9	27	15																
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder and culpable homicide. Secs. 302-304, 307, 308 and 396 ...	27	9	39	15	25	12																
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Secs. 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 335 ...	68	34	90	42	83	35																
(v) Serious criminal force. Secs. 353, 354, 356 and 357	13	10	16	6	27	13																

(vi) Other serious offences against the person	25	15	14	4	27	12
(vii) Dacoity. Secs. 395, 397 and 398 ...	2	1	3	1	7	1
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal. Secs. 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430-433, and 435-40	70	12	65	6	47	12
(ix) House-breaking and serious house-trespass. Secs. 449-452, 454, 455, and 457-460	371	27	409	34	386	26
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement. Secs. 341-344	45	12	45	9	40	8
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property	12	6	2	1	5	4
(xii) Theft. Secs. 370 to 382	374	148	373	134	352	130
(xiii) Receiving stolen property. Secs. 411 and 414	81	67	91	72	90	66
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house-trespass. Secs. 453, 456, 447 and 448	74	33	99	29	89	24
(xv) Other minor offences against property ...	18	12	14	1	16	10
Total ...	1,382	537	1,393	459	1,305	433

Table X—concld.

Statistics of criminal and civil justice.

Heads of Crime.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.
Civil Justice.											
Suits for money and movables	12,234	11,366									
Title and other suits ...	3,046	3,311									
Rent suits	4,095	4,229									
Total ...	19,375	18,906									

TABLE XI.

Finance—Receipts.

PRINCIPAL HEADS.	1890-91.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Land revenue (ordinary)	6,34,103	7,76,800	7,82,009	9,12,256	8,42,443								
" " (miscellaneous)	43,250	61,061	67,916	72,499	63,295								
Provincial rates ...	2,15,274	2,25,895	2,25,166	2,74,490	2,37,415								
Judicial stamps ..	3.26,731	3,86,128	3,92,102	4,22,787	4,04,169								
Non-Judicial stamps ..	1,33,076	1,43,475	1,44,878	1,64,350	1,51,623								
Opium	45,421	23,436	18,813	23.065	24,877								
Country spirits ..	64.835	1,10,676	94,291	90,773	1,05,729								
Ganja	1,11,675	1,19.896	1,12,950	1,23,096	1,27,105								
Other heads of excise ..	2,462	3,357	3,622	3,846	2,997								
Assessed taxes ..	60,546	71,074	70,070	70,753	53,619								
No. of assesses per thousand	1	1	1	1	....								
Forests ...	40,065	59,041	59,424	68,090	70,425								
Registration ..	32,877	42,490	41.003	51,882	53,709								
TOTAL ..	17,10,315	20,23,329	20,12,284	22,77,887	21,37,406								

TABLE XII.

Miscellaneous land revenue.

PARTICULARS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
NORTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION.												
Fisheries	18,254	25,557	26,636	25,835								
Total revenue	19,651	26,397	28,733	25,835								
SUNAMGANJ SUBDIVISION.												
Fisheries	8,312	6,440	5,466	5,144								
Total revenue	8,395	6,440	5,466	5,144								
HABIGANJ SUBDIVISION.												
Fisheries	11,832	13,600	12,573	14,127								
Total revenue	12,374	14,414	13,203	14,859								
SOUTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION.												
Fisheries	1,297	1,922	2,160	475								
Total revenue	2,698	3,433	3,598	975								
KARIMGANJ SUBDIVISION.												
Fisheries	16,945	16,465	20,075	15,548								
Total revenue	17,943	17,272	21,499	16,482								
TOTAL DISTRICT.												
Fisheries	56,640	63,984	66,910	61,129								
Other heads	4,421	3,972	5,589	2,166								
Total revenue	61,061	67,956	72,499	63,295								

TABLE XIII.

Land tenures.

PARTICULARS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
NORTH-SYLHET SUBDIVISION.												
Permanently settled	345,536	345,485	345,472	347,866								
TEMPORARILY SETTLED.												
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops	230,936	238,109	239,026	230,252								
Held on ordinary tenure ...	212,296	219,496	220,414	211,752								
Held revenue free	18,640	18,613	18,612	18,500								
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples	17,773	17,773	17,773	16,532								
Area settled under rules of 1876 and Sec. I of Settlement rules ...	11,578	11,578	11,578	11,528								
Area settled under other special rules	6,195	6,195	6,195	5,004								
Total settled area of the subdivision	594,245	601,367	602,271	594,650								
Total unsettled area of the subdivision	80,955	73,833	72,929	80,550								
SUNAMGANJ SUBDIVISION.												
Permanently settled	830,132	830,045	829,848	830,283								
TEMPORARILY SETTLED.												
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops	31,483	31,611	32,024	30,449								
Held on ordinary tenure ...	30,529	30,657	31,070	29,495								
Held revenue free	954	954	954	954								
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples	....	....	1	....								
Area settled under other special rules	....	....	1	....								
Total settled area of the subdivision	861,615	861,656	861,873	860,732								
Total unsettled area of the subdivision	93,905	93,864	93,647	94,788								

Table XIII—contd.

Land tenures.

PARTICULARS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
HABIGANJ SUBDIVISION.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Permanently settled	555,372	555,372	555,371	555,463								
TEMPORARILY SETTLED.												
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops	17,428	17,927	18,554	19,286								
Held on ordinary tenure ..	12,876	13,376	14,003	14,735								
Held revenue free	4,552	4,551	4,551	4,551								
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples	10,482	10,482	10,482	19,834								
Area settled under rules of 1876 and Sec. I of Settlement rules ..	8,405	8,405	8,405	8,249								
Area settled under other special rules	2,077	2,077	2,077	11,585								
Total settled area of the subdivision	583,282	583,781	584,407	594,583								
Total unsettled area of the subdvision	56,078	55,579	54,953	44,777								
SOUTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION.												
Permanently settled	292,349	292,349	292,345	292,831								
TEMPORARILY SETTLED.												
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops	48,794	50,894	52,035	52.085								
Held on ordinary tenure ...	38,461	40,561	41,702	41,752								
Held revenue free	10,333	10,333	10,333	10,333								
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples	81,471	85,400	91,766	83,993								
Area settled under rules of 1876 and Sec. I of Settlement rules ...	48,030	50,959	56,333	31,150								
Area settled under other special rules	33,441	34,441	35,433	52,843								
Total settled area of the subdivision	422,614	428,643	436,146	428,909								
Total unsettled area of the subdivision	114,986	108,957	101,454	108,691								

KARIMGANJ SUBDIVISION.				
Permanently settled	384,156	384,156	384,154	384,575
TEMPORARILY SETTLED.				
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops	50,254	56,082	57,694	56,312
Held on ordinary tenure ..	46,970	52,798	54,410	53,028
Held revenue free	3,284	3,284	3,284	3,284
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples	59,453	60,505	60,505	54,765
Area of fee—simple and commuted grants	1,878	1,878	1,878	1,878
Area settled under rules of 1876 and Sec. I of Settlement rules ..	39,634	40,291	40,291	41,741
Area settled under other special rules	17,941	18,336	18,336	11,146
Total settled area of the subdivision	493,863	500,743	502,353	495,652
Total unsettled area of the subdivision	176,857	169,977	168,367	175,068
TOTAL DISTRICT.				
Permanently settled	2,407,545	2,407,407	2,407,190	2,411,018
TEMPORARILY SETTLED.				
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops	378,895	394,623	399,333	388,384
Held on ordinary tenure ..	341,132	356,888	361,599	350,762
Held revenue free	37,763	37,735	37,734	37,622
Total land settled for cultivation of special crops	169,179	174.160	180,527	75,124
Aera of fee—simple and commuted grants	1,878	1,878	1,878	1,878
Area settled under rules of 1876 and Sec. I of Settlement rules ...	107,647	111,233	116,607	92,638
Area settled under other special rules —	59,654	61,049	62,042	80,578
Total settled area of the district ..	2,955,619	2,976,190	2,987,050	2,974,526
Total unsettled area of the district ..	522,781	502,210	491,350	503,874

NOTE.—The areas under different classes of estates have been revised and hence do not agree with those shown in the printed reports.

TABLE XIV.

Excise.

Principal Heads.		1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
North Sylhet Subdivision—													
No. of opium shops ..		6	5	6	5								
Amount paid for licenses ..	Rs.	2,166	2,664	2,202	2,796								
Quantity of opium issued ..		md srs 5 36	md srs 4 38	md srs 5 32	md srs ch 6 2 0	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch
Duty on opium sold	Rs.	6,726	5,643	6,612	6,897								
No. of ganja shops		19	17	17	18								
Amount paid for licenses ..	Rs.	10,838	7,990	8,490	10,526								
Quantity of ganja issued ..		md srs 39 35	md srs ch 34 27 8	md srs 44 8	md srs ch 43 24 12	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch
Duty on ganja sold	Rs.	11,630	10,437	13,252	13,731								
No. of country spirit shops ..		8	7	8	8								
Amount paid for licenses ..	Rs.	20,133	15,963	16,782	20,798								
No. of distilleries			..	..	..								
Quantity of liquor issued ..		..	..	..	..								
Still-head duty ..	Rs.	..	..	..	..								
No. of retail shops — ..		..	..	..	..								
Amount paid for licenses ..	Rs.	—	..	—	..								
Other heads of excise revenue ..	Rs.	636	1,346	1,128	748								
Sunamganj Subdivision—													
No. of opium shops		2	2	2	2								
Amount paid for licenses ..	Rs.	690	682	972	702								
Quantity of opium issued ..		md srs 1 12	md srs 1 5	md srs 1 3	md srs ch 1 11 0	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch
Duty on opium sold	Rs.	1,482	1,282	1,225	1,453								
No. of ganja shops		14	14	13	13								
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs.	8,178	8,398	6,986	7,766								
Quantity of ganja issued ..		md srs 26 18	md srs ch 21 1 4	md srs ch 28 29 12	md srs ch 27 16 10	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch
Duty on ganja sold .. —	Rs.	6,502	5,892	7,649	7,109								
No. of country spirit shops ..		6	6	6	5								
Amount paid for licenses ..	Rs.	5,534	5,076	4,883	5,596								
No. of distilleries		..	..	..	..								
Quantity of liquor issued ..		..	..	..	..								
Still-head duty	Rs.	..	..	..	—								

No. of retail shops ..	..	..	..	..	--								
Amount paid for licenses	.. Rs.	..	..	..	..								
Other heads of excise revenue	.. Rs.	146	138	144	142								
HABIGANJ SUBDIVISION—													
No. of opium shops ..	..	3	3	2	3								
Amount paid for licenses	.. Rs.	678	699	547	633								
		md srs	md srs	md srs	md srs ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch
Quantity of opium issued	..	0 31	0 27	0 28	0 23 0								
Duty on opium sold ..	.. Rs.	883	769	798	655								
No. of ganja shops ..	..	23	24	24	24								
Amount paid for licenses	.. Rs.	15,693	15,687	15,366	17,379								
		md srs ch	md srs	md srs	md srs ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch
Quantity of ganja issued	..	52 16 8	56 5	62 6	53 3 0								
Duty on ganja sold ..	.. Rs	14,645	16,431	17,952	15,651								
No. of country spirit shops	..	11	11	11	11								
Amount paid for licenses	.. Rs.	22,598	20,058	18,468	20,984								
No. of distilleries ..	..	..	..	--	..								
Amount of liquor issued	..	..	..	..	...								
Still-head duty --	.. Rs.	..	..	..	--								
No. of retail shops ..	..	..	..	..	..								
Amount paid for licenses	.. Rs.	..	..	..	..								
Other heads of excise revenue	.. Rs.	553	570	840	754								
SOUTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION—													
No. of opium shops ..	..	1	1	1	1								
Amount paid for licenses	.. Rs	294	426	210	372								
		md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch
Quantity of opium issued	..	0 10 0	0 10 0	0 10 0	0 10 0								
Duty on opium sold ..	.. Rs.	285	285	285	285								
No. of ganja shops --	..	22	22	22	22								
Amount paid for licenses	.. Rs.	13,453	11,420	11,148	11,534								
		md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch
Amount of ganja issued	..	59 28 12	47 36 12	57 27 8	53 17 8								
Duty on ganja sold ..	.. Rs.	16,869	15,840	19,960	18,480								
No. of country spirit shops	..	14	14	14	14								
Amount paid for licenses	.. Rs.	47,480	37,558	38,438	45,511								
No. of distillieres ..	..	..	..	..	..								
Quantity of liquor issued	..	..	..	..	..								
Still-head duty ..	.. Rs.	..	--	..	..								
No. of retail shops ..	..	..	..	..	..								
Amount paid for licenses	.. Rs	..	..	..	..								
Other heads of excise revenue	.. Rs.	462	602	606	745								

TABLE XIV—concld.

Excise.

PRINCIPAL HEADS.		1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
KARIMGANJ SUBDIVISION—													
No. of opium shops ..	..	16	16	16	10								
Amount paid for licenses	.. Rs.	2,737	1,090	1,806	1,764								
		md srs ch	md srs	md srs	md srs ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch
Quantity of opium issued	..	6 23 0	4 25	7 15	8 7 0								
Duty on opium sold ..	.. Rs.	7,495	5,273	8,408	9,320								
No. of ganja shops ..	..	21	21	21	21								
Amount paid for licenses	.. Rs.	9,260	9,968	9,072	9,336								
		md srs ch	md srs	md srs	md srs ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch
Quantity of ganja issued	..	46 35 8	38 34	47 9	54 38 8								
Duty on ganja sold ..	.. Rs.	12,828	10,887	13,221	15,593								
No. of country spirit shops	..	9	9	9	9								
Amount paid for licenses	.. Rs.	14,931	15,636	12,202	12,840								
No. of distilleries ..	..	..	..	..	..								
Quantity of liquor issued	..	..	..	..	..								
Still-head duty ..	.. Rs.	..	..	..	..								
No. of retail shops ..	..	..	..	..	..								
Amount paid for licenses	.. Rs.	..	..	..	..								
Other heads of excise revenue	.. Rs.	1,560	966	1,128	608								
TOTAL DISTRICT—													
No. of opium shops ..	..	28	27	27	21								
Amount paid for licenses	.. Rs.	6,565	5,561	5,737	6,267								
		md srs ch	md srs	md srs	md srs ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch
Quantity of opium issued	..	14 32 0	11 25	15 8	16 13 0								
Duty on opium sold ..	.. Rs.	16,871	13,252	17,328	18,610								
No. of ganja shops ..	..	99	98	97	98								
Amount paid for licenses	.. Rs.	57,422	53.463	51,062	56,541								
		md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch	md sr ch
Quantity of ganja issued	..	225 13 12	198 24 8	240 0 4	232 20 6								
Duty on ganja sold ..	.. Rs.	62,474	59,487	72,034	70,564								
No. of country spirit shops	..	48	47	48	47								
Amount paid for licenses	.. Rs.	1,10,676	94,291	90,773	1,05,729								
No. of distilleries ..	..	..	..	..	..								
Quantity of liquor issued	..	..	..	..	..								
Still-head duty ..	.. Rs.	..	..	..	..								
No. of retail shops ..	..	..	..	..	..								
Amount paid for licenses	.. Rs.	..	..	..	..								
Other heads of excise revenue	.. Rs.	3,357	3,622	3,846	2,997								

Table XV.

Income and expenditure of Local Boards.

North Sylhet.

Sources of income.	Income.		Heads of expenditure.	Expenditure.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs		Rs.	Rs.
Provincial rates ...	49,859	52,550	Post office ...	3,512	3,613
Police	2,660	5,662	Administration ...	205	205
Tolls on ferries ...	8,925	9,778	Education ...	10,750	19,068
Contributions ...	7,200	10,995	Medical ...	3,497	6,769
Debt	...	2,959	Civil works ...	36,687	59,144
Miscellaneous ...	139	34	Debt	133	215
			Miscellaneous ...	299	809
Total ...	68,783	81,978	Total ...	55,083	89,823

Sunamganj.

Sources of income.	Income.		Heads of expenditure.	Expenditure.	
	1890-91	1900-01		1890-91	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs	Rs.
Provincial rates ..	37,217	37,378	Post office ...	5,157	4,736
Police	2,334	3,751	Administration ...	138	151
Tolls on ferries ...	2,407	3,361	Education ...	8,474	11,606
Contributions ..	1,183	3,435	Medical ...	2,226	5,126
Debt	...	4,060	Civil works ...	19,427	22,606
Miscellaneous ...	153	641	Debt	...	5,257
			Miscellaneous ...	781	2,308
Total ...	43,294	52,626	Total ...	36,203	51,790

Table XV—contd.

Income and expenditure of Local Boards.

Habiganj.

Sources of income.	Income.		Heads of expenditure.	Expenditure.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Provincial rates ...	55,333	56,326	Post office ...	3,759	4,212
Police ...	4,100	5,609	Administration ...	211	223
Tolls on ferrics ...	3,435	4,352	Education ...	13,685	19,326
Contributions ...	...	2,160	Medical ...	4,937	5,443
Debt ...	...	6,615	Civil works ...	29,955	44,301
Miscellaneous ...	235	57	Debt ...	...	6,616
			Contributions ...	205	...
			Miscellaneous ...	250	445
Total ...	63,103	75,119	Total ..	53,002	80,566

South Sylhet.

Sources of income.	Income.		Heads of expenditure.	Expenditure.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Provincial rates ...	36,191	37,423	Post office ..	3,165	1,416
Police ...	3,175	5,036	Administration ...	130	130
Tolls on ferries ...	6,700	7,287	Education ...	13,866	20,277
Contributions ...	16,600	21,600	Medical ..	3,526	9,092
Debt ...	...	3,457	Civil works ...	28,804	36,117
Miscellaneous ...	171	480	Debt ...	...	3,418
			Miscellaneous ...	85	1,900
Total ...	62,837	75,283	Total ...	49,576	72,350

Table XV—concld.

Income and expenditure of Local Boards, Karimganj.

Sources of income.		Income. 1890-91.	Income. 1900-01.	Heads of expenditure.		Expenditure. 1890-91.	Expenditure. 1900-01.
		Rs	Rs.			Rs.	Rs.
Provincial rates	...	40,493	44,390	Post office	...	3,760	945
Police	...	1,820	2,875	Administration	...	146	146
Tolls on ferries	...	10,683	11,575	Education	...	9,180	12,494
Contributions	...	4,000	17,607	Medical	...	3,316	7,944
Debt	...	...	3,391	Civil works	...	34,031	52,125
Miscellaneous	...	129	91	Debt	...	...	3,391
				Contributions	...	...	1,690
				Miscellaneous	...	1,279	1,194
Total	...	57,125	79,929	Total	...	51,712	79,929

TABLE XVI.

Income and expenditure of Municipality and Union.

SYLHET MUNICIPALITY.

Sources of income.	Income. 1890-91	Income. 1900-01	Heads of expenditure.	Expenditure. 1890-91	Expenditure. 1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
SYLHET MUNICIPALITY.					
Opening balance ...	3,500	2,362	Administration ...	2,799	2,464
Taxes on houses and lands ...	4,926	1,191	Conservancy ...	5,108	6,907
Pounds ...	1,760	671	Public works ...	5,499	4,412
Tax on persons ...	......	6,036	Public instructions	565	718
			Drainage ...	868	1,093
Tolls on roads and ferries ...	6,915	6,342	Other heads ...	4 947	4,507
			Closing balance	603	925
Conservancy ...	2,621	3,437			
Other sources ...	667	987			
Total ...	20,389	21,026	Total ...	20,389	21,026
HABIGANJ UNION.					
Opening balance ...	110	4,751	Administration ...	402	504
Tax on houses and lands ...	784	132	Conservancy ...	437	3,024
Pounds ...	956	1,104	Police	1,051	795
Fees from markets	975	......	Public works ...	108	510
Grants from Provincial and Local Funds	...	1,000	Public instructions	52	196
			Drainage ...	20	275
Tax on persons ...	...	1,544	Other heads ...	1,302	1,321
Tolls on roads and ferries ...	426	1,230	Closing balance ...	7	3,414
Other sources ...	128	278			
Total ...	3,379	10,039	Total ...	3,379	10,039

TABLE XVII.

Strength of Police Force.

PARTICULARS.	1881.	1891.	1901.
CIVIL POLICE.			
SUPERVISING STAFF.			
District and Assistant Superintendents	1	1	2
Inspectors	5	6	6
SUBORDINATE STAFF.			
Sub-Inspectors	16	15	27
Head Constables	54	74	58
Constables	336	450	527
Rural Police	4,376	5,611	5,318
Union and Municipal Police	32	7	7
Total expenditure ... Rs.	2,28,685	3,43,538	3,74,885

Actual strength for 1881 and sanctioned strength for other years. As the full sanctioned number of Sub-Inspectors was not entertained during the year 1901, only the actual number of Sub-Inspectors and Head Constables is shown for that year.

TABLE XVIII.

Police Stations and Out-posts in 1904.

Name of Police Stations.		Sanctioned strength.			
		Sub Inspector.	Head Constables	Constables.	Total.
North Sylhet.	Balaganj P. S. ...	2	...	8	10
	Biswanath O. P.	1	...	5	6
	Fenchuganj O. P.	...	1	2	3
	Golapganj O. P.	1	...	5	6
	Goyainghat O. P.	1	...	5	6
	Jaintia O. P. ...	1	...	4	5
	Kanairghat P. S.	1	...	8	9
	Sylhet P. S. ...	3	...	12	15
	Do Town O. P.	1	...	38	39
Sunamganj.	Chhatak P. S. ...	2	...	8	10
	Dharmapasha P. S.	2	...	8	10
	Dirai P. S. ...	1	1	8	10
	Jagannathpur, O. P.	1	...	6	7
	Sunamganj P. S.	2	...	12	14
	Tahirpur O. P. ...	1	...	4	5
Habiganj.	Abidabad O. P. ...	1	...	6	7
	Baniyachung P. S.	2	...	8	10
	Habiganj P. S. ...	4	...	16	20
	Lakhai O. P. ...	1	...	4	5
	Madhabpur P. S.	2	...	8	10
	Muchikandi O. P.	2	...	8	10
	Nabiganj P. S. ...	2	...	10	12
South Sylhet.	Kamalganj P. S.	1	1	12	14
	Kulaura P S. ...	2	...	8	10
	Maulavi Bazar P. S.	2	...	14	16
	Rajnagar O. P. ...	1	...	5	6
	Srimangal O. P.	2	...	6	8
Karimganj.	Jaldhub P. S. ...	2	...	8	10
	Karimganj P. S.	3	1	16	20
	Patharkandi O. P.	1	...	5	6
	Ratabari O. P. ...	1	...	5	6

TABLE XIX.

Statistics of Jails.

Sylhet Jail.

		1881.	1891.	1901.
Average daily population	Male ...	513·83	356·29	540·21
	Female ...	12·20	6·88	5·68
Rate of mortality per 1,000 ...		17	80	33
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Expenditure on jail maintenance ...		36,722	25,544	42,372
Cost per prisoner * (excluding civil prisoners)		36	38	63
Profits on jail manufacture		8,933	5,806	—814
Earnings per prisoner †		17	18	—2

Sunamganj Subsidiary Jail.

		1881.	1891.	1901.
Average daily population	Male ...	21·61	20·64	29·23
	Female ...	·08	·01	·08
Rate of mortality per 1,000 ...		92	97	34
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Expenditure on jail maintenance ...		1,440	1,419	1,806
Cost per prisoner* (excluding civil prisoners)		25	28	49
Profits on jail manufacture ...		166	370	1,125
Earnings per prisoner †		9	23	52

* On rations and clothing only.

† Calculated on the average number sentenced to labour.

Table XIX—contd.

Statistics of Jail.

Habiganj Subsidiary Jail.

		1881.	1891.	1901.
Average daily population	Male ...	29·24	30·55	51·63
	Female ...	·34	·08	·81
Rate of mortality per 1,000 ...		34	33	......
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Expenditure on jail maintenance ...		1,882	2,029	1,710
Cost per prisoner * (excluding civil prisoners)		28	37	24
Profits on jail manufacture ...		125	228	1,068
Earnings per prisoner †		5	11	22

South Sylhet Subsidiary Jail.

		1883.	1891.	1901.
Average daily population	Male ...	13·64	20·15	23·99
	Female ...	·20	·12	·40
Rate of mortality per 1,000 ...		...	49	...
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Expenditure on jail maintenance ...		1,138	1,513	1,509
Cost per prisoner * (excluding civil prisoners)		27	31	45
Profits on jail manufacture		40	196	208
Earnings per prisoner†		4	12	13

* On rations and clothing only.

† Calculated on the average number sentenced to labour.

Table XIX—concld.

Statistics of Jail.

Karimganj Subsidiary Jail.

		1881.	1891.	1901.
Avarge daily population	Male ...	1839	17·87	30·92
	Female ...	·03	...	·46
Rate of mortality per 1000		54	...	...
Expenditure on jail maintenance ...		Rs. 1,488	Rs. 1,298	Rs. 1,359
Cost per prisoner * (excluding civil prisoners)		30	29	31
Profits on jail manufacture		392	248	263
Earnings per prisoner†		27	19	11

* On rations and clothing only.

† Calculated on the average number sentenced to labour.

TABLE XX.

Education.

	1900-01	1901-02	1902-03	1903-04	1904-05	1905-06	1906-07	1907-08	1908-09	1909-10	1910-11	1911-12
COLLEGES.												
Number	1	1	1	1								
Number of boys	49	40	37	39								
Number of passing F. A.	13	8	9	14								
SECONDARY SCHOOLS.												
High Schools—												
Number	7	7	7	7								
Number of boys reading in High School classes ...	518	493	442	564								
Numbre of boys reading in Middle School classes ...	450	458	507	507								
Number of boys reading in Primary classes ...	633	741	863	907								
Middle English Schools—												
Number	46	42	43	43								
Number of boys reading in Middle School classes ..	382	379	325	321								
Number of boys reading in Primary classes ..	2,911	2,586	2,632	2,757								
Middle Vernacular Schools—												
Number	15	15	15	14								
Number of boys reading in Middle School classes ...	155	133	97	102								
Number of boys reading in Primary classes ..	652	748	801	737								

TABLE XX.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS.												
Upper Primary Schools—												
Number	4	47	41	38								
Number of boys reading in Upper Primary classes ..	333	323	232	192								
Number of boys readng in Lower Primary classes ..	1,474	1,488	1,380	1,223								
Lower Primary Schools—												
Number	833	835	804	751								
Number of boys reading in three upper classes ...	(a) 28,306	(a) 27,474	10,070	9,228								
Number of boys reading in lower classes			15,907	15,959								
FEMALE EDUCATION.												
Number of girls' Schools	137	125	104	83								
Number of girls reading (whether in girls' or boys' Schools) in—												
High Schools	...	..	...	...								
Middle English School —	...	2	...	..								
Middle Vernacular Schools —	...	...	1	..								
Upper Primary Schools ..	48	59	40	18								
Lower Primary Schools ...	3,648	3,414	2,527	1,810								

(a) Separate figures not available.

TABLE XXI.

Educational Finance.

PARTICULARS.	No. of institutions.	Expenditure on institutions maintained or aided by public funds in 1900-01 from					Expenditure per head of scholar.		
		Provincial Revenues.	District and Municipal Funds.	Fees.	Other sources.	Total.			
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	As.	P.
Training and Special Schools ...	8	......	1,382	1,457	2,060	4,899	7	4	8
Secondary Boys' Schools—									
Upper (High)	7	7,363	.....	23,454	2,764	33,581	21	11	6
Lower (Middle)	61	1,554	17,276	15,531	13,357	47,718	12	5	10
Primary Boys' Schools—									
Upper	47	......	5,176	3,575	2,498	11,249	6	5	2
Lower	833	......	45,340	15,158	1,731	62,229	2	2	7
Girls' Schools	137	......	4,802	4	......	4,806	2	7	5
TOTAL ...	1,093	8,917	73,976	59,179	22,410	1,64,482	4	4	3

TABLE XXIII.

Dispensaries.

Name of Dispensary.	1900.		1901.		1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.		1906.	
	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.
	Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.	
Sylhet ..	8,956	10,596	6,095	12,223	5,077	14,070	6,467	14,498	6,528	14,022				
Sylhet (Municipal)	1,151	8,574	1,148	8,532	1,159	8,364	1,393	7,655	1,840	8,327				
Balaganj ...	2,023	5,304	1,695	5,190	1,125	5,274	1,292	5,461	1,325	5,926				
Fenchuganj ..	1,584	6,054	1,657	5,835	1,370	8,815	1,507	9,182	1,308	9,355				
Jaintiapur ..	1,794	5,516	1,772	5,302	1,239	6,205	2,063	6,843	1,150	7,321				
Kanairghat ..	2,419	6,016	2,833	5,508	872	6,369	904	5,536	926	5,214				
Goyainghat ...	1,469	4,325	1,570	5,672	932	6,169	985	6,068	790	5,724				
Digli ..	2,052	3,906	1,761	4,221	846	4,853	1,003	4,864	1,017	4,982				
Thakurbari ..	1,776	4,930	1,464	5,306	1,037	6,301	1,432	6,221	1,257	6,838				
Sunamganj ..	2,168	6,924	2,711	7,850	1,522	7,991	938	8,664	1,933	8,370				
Chhatak ..	1,553	8,682	1,538	9,090	1,227	8,396	1,531	8,101	1,657	7,927				
Jagannathpur ..	1,033	5,867	1,250	5,244	1,233	5,671	976	6,640	1,082	6,337				
Tahirpur ...	806	2,506	1,420	1,511	862	2,382	1,307	2,387	820	3,103				
Dirai ..	1,325	3,321	1,433	2,838	1,035	3,856	970	4,427	924	5,357				
Madhyanagar ...	1,189	3,118	1,195	3,025	900	3,783	691	3,314	582	5,470				
Habiganj ..	5,085	8,555	2,370	11,586	3,039	13,115	2,429	12,922	2,120	13,729				
Baniyachung ..	1,677	5,317	1,623	7,379	1,240	8,664	1,297	8,917	1,568	8,810				
Muchikandi ..	1,536	5,271	1,055	5,206	748	5,228	1,040	5,054	909	5,224				
Nabiganj ..	1,044	3,838	967	2,906	1,623	3,524	1,508	4,174	1,093	5,141				
Jalsuka ..	931	3,725	1,038	4,262	937	4,377	1,094	5,040	804	4,902				
Jagadispur ..	1,479	4,341	1,608	4,707	908	4,505	1,134	5,176	899	4,851				
Bahubal Bazar ..	1,262	5,749	1,370	6,481	1,015	6,985	1,057	5,907	1,087	6,803				
Maulavi Bazar ..	2,970	8,214	2,984	8,821	1,494	10,702	1,413	12,208	1,616	13,533				
Panchgaon ..	1,797	3,338	1,737	4,013	1,396	3,970	1,046	3,982	1,017	4,478				
Rabir Bazar ..	1,622	10,425	1,538	11,034	1,217	11,534	1,303	12,292	1,567	13,168				
Srimangal ..	1,990	4,000	2,955	4,664	2,671	5,013	1,108	6,618	1,217	6,240				

Table XXIII—contd.

Dispensaries.

Name of Dispensary.	1907.		1908.		1909.		1910.		1911.		1912.	
	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.
	Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.	
Sylhet												
Sylhet (Municipal)												
Balaganj												
Fenchuganj												
Jaintiapur												
Kanairghat												
Goyainghat												
Digli												
Thakurbari												
Sunamganj												
Chhatak												
Jagannathpur												
Tahirpur												
Dirai												
Madhyanagar												
Habiganj												
Baniyachung												
Muchikandi												
Nabiganj												
Jaluka												
Jagadispur												
Rahubal Bazar												
Maulavi Bazar												
Panchgaon												
Rabir Bazar												
Srimangal												

Table XXIII—contd.

Dispensaries.

Name of Dispensary.	1900.		1901.		1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.		1906.	
	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.
	Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.	
Kamalganj ..	2,173	5,019	1,765	5,375	845	5,432	1,135	5,222	942	6,474				
Manumukh ..	2,014	3,800	1,424	4,000	841	4,692	980	6,031	970	7.340				
Indeswar ..	1,656	2,409	1,824	3,484	884	2,464	939	2,853	1,035	2,616				
Munshibazar ...	1,764	3,398	1,887	3,542	990	4,637	1,096	5,682	1,070	8,987				
Shamsherganj ...	1,330	3,140	1,902	3,679	738	5,277	1,706	5,624	1,368	6,874				
Kulaura ..	1,308	4,272	1,091	8,245	770	9,729	1,250	10,029	1,551	10,136				
Karimganj ..	2,091	4,515	1,767	6,013	1,522	7,109	935	8,049	1,029	8,468				
Atgram ..	1,362	3,580	1,251	3,379	743	3,616	774	4,379	1,020	4,014				
Bhanga ..	1,412	6,705	1,519	6,952	1,360	6,818	1,111	8,189	1,690	8,336				
Bianibazar ..	1,583	6,262	1,611	6,121	1,191	6,079	1,450	6,167	1,602	6,024				
Patharkandi ..	1,635	3,330	1,303	3,248	732	3,514	809	3,406	670	1,690				
Tilpara ..	...	...	..	..	..	...	...	..	463	2,327				
Latu ..	1,550	3,593	905	2,808	825	2,968	729	3,230	879	3,840				
Nilam Bazar ..	1,737	4,433	1,348	4,383	755	4,114	1,092	3,611	951	4,528				
Barlekha ..	1,236	3,710	1,402	4,467	815	4,035	1,603	2,893	1,006	4,605				
Chargola ..	942	3,839	936	3,189	939	3,028	962	4,323	967	5,483				
Kaliganj ..	..	..	..	..	794	4,110	1,085	5,489	1,305	5,988				

Table XXIII—concld.

Dispensaries.

Name of Dispensary.	1907.		1908.		1909.		1910.		1911.		1912.	
	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.
	Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.	
Kamalganj												
Manumukh												
Indeswar												
Munshibazar												
Shamsherganj												
Kulaura												
Karimganj												
Atgram												
Bhanga												
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